

[著] 丈月城

Illust. BUNBUN

Campioness of Sanctuary

神域のキャンピオーネス

英雄界ヒューペルボレア

volume 4

オーディオドラマダウンロードシリアルコード付き限定版

JOE TAKEDUKI & BUNBUN



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「大火を以て滅ぼすべし」

彼らはみな古代風の衣を身につけていた。
二世紀前半の地球にしながら、神話の装いなのである。
赤い外套に黄金の籠手・白銀の弓といういでたちのアポロン――

Appolon
太陽神アポロン





……よいでしょう。

考えてみれば、
あなたも神殺しのひとり。

順縁にせよ逆縁にせよ、いずれ某かの縁が
わたくしとの間に生まれても不思議ではないのですから

Byakuren Oh
白蓮王 ビャクレンオウ

焔のなかで——白蓮王の衣がめらめらと燃えつきていった。袂と裾がやたらと
ひらひらしたカウンス、紅いストール『披帛』も、さらにずっとかぶっていたヴェールと
素顔を隠していた布も——。今、青き焔のなかで真っ白な裸身が露になっていた。





「僕はカサンドラのこと、とても好きだな」

「カサンドラもそうでしょう?」

「……………ずっと」

お慕いしておりました」

目を合わせようとしないう女、その耳元へささやきかける。
蓮に抱かれたままのカサンドラは「!?」と硬直し、見る間に真っ赤になった。
顔だけでなく全身が紅潮している。
今度こそ、蓮は愛おしい彼女の目をまっすぐのぞき込む。



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Tour Guide of Sanctuary “Hyperborea”

Goddess Leto

Born from the Titans, the mother of Apollo and Artemis.

In Greek mythology, there wasn't any other episode about her other than that. The worship of Goddess Leto only existed as an attachment with the faith toward Apollo and Artemis.

Most likely she was a goddess of Asia Minor before she was [imported] to Greek mythology.

She was a goddess of good harvest who was called with names like Leto, Lato, Ladha, etc.

.

Apollo

His divinity was extremely diverse.

He was a god who governed over abundant grain crop and stock-farming, and a god of medical treatment.

He was also a god who kept the rat and wolf away and exterminated the harmful insect. He was also a god who governed over prophecy, music, poem, and sports.

He was also a god of light and regarded as the avatar of sun.

There were various theories regarding the origin of his name.

A theory that the name came from Greek language's [destroyer : Apollyon], the theory [cattle pen – congregation : Apellai].

The theory that he was a god of the orient that was imported from Asia Minor was also firmly rooted.

There was also a theory that a god's name [Apulunas] that was written in Hittites's epitaph was his root.

And then there was also another theory of origins from the north with Hyperborea legend as the supporting evidence.

.

Hyperborea

There was an offering from Hyperborea people that was sent to the holy ground of Apollo, Delos Island.

The authenticity of it wasn't certain, but the historian Herodotus wrote that down.

Hyperborea country was exceedingly warm and night wouldn't come.

It was constantly daytime and overflowing with hymn of praise toward Apollo.

Innumerable ambers that were shining gold brilliantly were buried within the sand of the large river flowing inside the country—

There was such legend, but on the other hand there was also a legend like below.

The travelers were astounded by the poor and shabby livelihood of Hyperborea country that they stopped travelling further than that.....

.

Thus spoke the wise man of ancient Greek, regarding a certain lost world

"If gold is excluded, the most precious metal orichalcum could be mined throughout the island."

"There was also a lot of lumber for the sake of constructing building, there was also every kind of livestock and wild animal. Every kind of herb, flower, and fruits were also growing luxuriously."

"Bull was set free in the temple. Ten kings marched in unaided in order to delight the god, using stick and rope they captured the ox—and cut open its throat."

"The bull's throat was cut open above the pillar that was carved with the text of the law and dyed the text with blood."

"After offering the limbs of the bull to the god, the remaining blood was mixed with wine and poured to the fire of the sacrifice. Like that they vowed to protect the law, obey the law, and punish crime."

Prologue

The winter should arrive before long.

The blowing cold wind mercilessly froze the bodies of the humans. Furthermore when summer came, this land would completely change into intense heat.

Dry wind would strongly blow wildly for the whole year constantly—.

It was that kind of desolate land.

"O the radiant Apollo."

Goddess Athena asked with a lovely and dignified voice.

While she had the appearance of a maiden in her teen, she possessed a cold majesty.

"This is your destination.....is that right?"

"Yes. I should add that after all this is only the [first place] though."

The one who answered with a ruffian smile was a muscular and handsome young man.

A crown of bay laurel was decorating his lovely golden curly hair. He was the dandy who was the pride of Greek mythology and the sun god, Apollo himself.

Right beside him, the goddess of wisdom and war Athena narrowed her eyes.

The daughter of Zeus wasn't staring at the sun god, but to a [picture of animals].

"This place was a shrine at the faraway past wasn't it?"

"And then, it was also a village where humans were living. That was if you traced back for around ten thousand years from now."

What the two gods were staring at—

It was a line drawing that was carved on a huge rock.

A herd of buffalo, a herd of deer, a herd of horse, dolphin, wolf, goat, panther, and so on. Diversed animals were drawn on the surface of rock with a very simple method.

It was a rock wall.

Rocky mountains were assembled at the center of a wasteland with nice visibility, forming a gorge.

And then, animals and humans were drawn here and there on the rock surface of this area—.

Humans singing and dancing, humans hunting with bow and arrow.

This land was [by the side of sea], it seemed that in the ancient time this area was also at the bottom of the sea. The name of the place seemed to be Gobustan.

But, Athena and Apollo who were gods didn't pay any care about that.

By the way, they were also accompanied by a human.

Princess Cassandra. The princess of Troia royalty was staring at the numerous line drawing with blank eyes.

Her beautiful purple eyes were reflecting animal picture that had deep charm despite its simplicity.

"....."

However, Cassandra didn't say anything. She was only staring at the beasts that were drawn on the rock surface without doing anything else. Her emotion also didn't surface outside at all.

Also, all of them were wearing outfit with ancient style.

They were dressed like in mythology while being on earth of the first half of 21st century.

Apollo was wearing a red mantle, golden gauntlets, and silver bow. He asked Athena who was wearing a green robe and carrying a staff.

"Zeus's daughter. In what way you intend to destroy this surface world?"

"It ought to be destroyed with great flood."

Athena instantly answered with a severe tone.

"That is natural. After all that is the promised demise of the world."

"Hmm. That's different from my opinion."

"What? Then <ruby>Phoebos</rt>Shining one</rt></ruby>, let me hear your opinion."

"It ought to be destroyed with great fire."

"Foolish. One day when the time comes, the great flood will surely arrive, but even with the eyes of I the goddess of wisdom, I still cannot see the sign of the great fire."

"What. If this Apollo call for the great fire of inescapable destruction—then that's what will happen."

Athena shook her head hearing the boating of the sun god.

"You are certainly a mighty god. You're the one who illuminate the world and the humans with the light of the dazzling sun. However, you aren't the bringer of flame that will bring about the destruction of the world."

"Only right now. But, I can become something like that."

".....Hou?"

Athena grinned at Apollo's implicative reply.

"I see. So you're searching for your birthplace because of that. Very well, in that case let's join the destruction of water with the destruction of fire. That'll be also suitable for this polluted world."

"I'm humbled by your discernment. As expected from the princess of Metis who is overflowing with wisdom."

He hadn't explained anything, but Athena was easily convinced.

Apollo smiled at her wisdom that was exactly like in the myth, and then, her gaze turned toward Princess Cassandra who still hadn't said even a word.

"Now then, I'll have you prove your usefulness soon."

Troia's cursed prophet. The beautiful princess who was once Apollo's priestess.

Reasoning had been stolen temporarily from Cassandra. It was Apollo who invited her to the mental state of half awake and half asleep. It was for the sake of drawing out her power.

He whispered into the ear of the Troia princess who was still in a trance.

"Princess. The people who drew the drawing of animals—no, the 《holy gods》 in this land after that sought for new land that they still hadn't seen and departed. Some went to the west, some went to the east, and some other went to the south."

"....."

Cassandra didn't say anything. But, light was dwelling inside her eyes that were staring on the drawing.

"They didn't know how to work with bronze, let alone iron. They were people who shaved rock to create tool and weapon. Through several thousand years, these people advanced to the east and the west. In other words this land was none other than the original homeland that gave birth to many civilizations and gods. That was the homeland of this Apollo, Hyperborea——"

"....."

"Can you see the situation of that country, princess?"

"....."

"Oo Hyperborea. The land yonder of the north wind. You are the country of the everlasting spring. The light of that land will never come to an end, continuing to illuminate the heaven and earth for eternity. Oo Hyperborea. O homeland of Apollo, the god of far shooting, the owner of silver bow. The path to arrive to that country, no one has any hope to go through it——"

Apollo sang in praise of his birthplace.

His was a beautiful voice even at the normal time, but when he sang his voice sounded even more beautiful.

If humans listened to it, they would cry with river of tears from feeling moved. Cassandra who monopolized that song was——

Silent even now.

However, her eyes were emitting strong golden light.

The prophet Cassandra now shouldn't be seeing the drawing drawn on the rock anymore, but a different scenery. Yes. The land that gave birth to the sun god Apollo——

".....I, saw"

The lovely lips of Troia princess whispered with a hoarse voice.

"Sea.....blue sea that is spreading without end.....a lot of islands.....
torn apart life and reborn life.....the holy land where the heroes of
salvation gather....."

"Good work, princess."

The instant Apollo extolled her, Cassandra's knees crumbled powerlessly.

She ran out of strength and fell. The sun god's tough right arm quickly
caught the body of the prophet. Athena was staring at that with admiring
look.

"That's quite the plan, o radiant one."

"So you've guessed it. The wisdom eyes of Athena are truly terrifying."

"The legend that imparted the definite location of Hyperborea isn't
remaining in this era. But, these drawings are gods, legends that were drawn
by the people of that country. How do they change later on—if Princess
Cassandra, a prophet is made to have a vision of the [future]....."

"That will become the [key] to open the gate to the sanctuary. Well, I
myself have the authority of foresight but....."

"Well, I myself am a god who possess the authority of foresight but....."

"You are Apollo, the heaven sent child of reasoning. You have no hope of
reaching the state of trance like this and obtain the oracle inside your
dream. You kidnapped Princess Cassandra is for this."

"Everything is exactly as you say. Well then, let us depart."

In order to bring about destruction to the polluted surface world.

Apollo proclaimed the resumption of their journey with a beautiful voice
without equal.

"To the second destination. Our journey has only began."

.

Sun god Apollo.

In Greek mythology, his birthplace was considered to be Delos Island.

Leto, the mother of Apollo and moon goddess Artemis quietly gave birth at an island with a lot of boulders floating at Aegean Sea—furthermore she was doing it hidden in the depth of the earth.

The father of the twins was the god king Zeus. She gave birth there in order to escape from the rage of Zeus's legal wife Hera.

Right after he was born, Apollo grew to become a strong young man. And then he killed the monster Python that was nesting in the holy land Delphi with his bow.

Spurred by that momentum, Apollo appeared before Zeus.

The gods unanimously praised him—.

That was the tale of Apollo's birth. However there was a strange tale. Before he appeared at Olympus Mountain where Zeus was at, he was living for a year at the land that was called Hyperborea.....was what the tale said.

Chapter 1 – To Beyond the North Wind

1

Darkness was spreading without end.

Jet black space. However, countless dots of light were scattered within the darkness. They were like the radiance of stars coloring the space.

But—the sun god Apollo talked about the true identity of the lights.

"Princess. Every single one of those is gate to a sanctuary."

"Oh my....."

Cassandra was astonished.

Both of them were sitting on a carriage side by side.

However the carriage wasn't pulled by horse but by two swans. The pure white sacred birds that were also Apollo's divine messenger were elegantly flapping their wing and advanced through the air.

.....When Cassandra noticed, she was already being placed on the swan carriage.

And then, there wasn't the figure of Goddess Athena anywhere.

"Apollo-sama. Where did the princess goddess of shining eyes go to?"

"Fufu. You will understand sooner or later."

The golden haired sun god dodged the question with the smile of a ruffian that was already looking familiar on his face before pointing straight

toward the direction the carriage was heading to.

Scraggy mass of rock was floating in the jet black sky.

.....It was similar with what would be called an asteroid in the space of earth.

"More importantly right now I have to finish a minor business at there. I'll have you help out again!"

"Ye, yes."

The captured Cassandra wasn't being treated roughly.

Apollo was extremely large-hearted as well as overflowing with tolerant in his interaction with her.

But, he didn't show any sign of releasing Cassandra. He requested her to help with his search of his so called "birthplace". Cassandra also couldn't possible harm the mood of the sun god and she followed what she was told.

After a while, the carriage of swans landed down on the land.

As expected, the asteroid's ground only had rock.

Cassandra walked together with Apollo on top of it while opening her eyes wide.

"My. There is a shrine!"

"A guard is settling down here since who know when."

The sun god was heading toward a shrine made from stone.

Several stone pillars that were engraved with carving were lined up, supporting a magnificent stone roof. There was also similar shrine at Cassandra's birthplace, Troia.

And then, there was a stone stair at the entrance—.

A black haired young man was sitting there. He seemed to be at his early twenty.

There was no divine atmosphere that could be felt from him at all. Was he a human?

Even though the confused Cassandra and the brazen Apollo were approaching, the young man didn't lift his face.

He was holding something that seemed to be a small stone slab with both hands and peered into it.

"My?"

Cassandra noticed. It wasn't a stone slab.

"That is the thing called smartphone isn't it?"

".....It's amazing that you know what this is even though it doesn't look like you're from modern birth."

The black haired young man finally lifted his face.

He was handsome. Of course he wasn't a match against the sun god beside her, but he had a look that was worthy to be called a handsome man. But there was obstinacy dwelling in his gaze and expression that he wasn't even trying to hide.

The young man turned a sharp gaze toward Cassandra's beautiful face.

"You came from a mythological world somewhere aren't you?"

"Yes. I am Cassandra of Troia."

"Oh, a famous person huh. The cursed prophet. Even I know you."

"Is that so?"

"Well yeah.Well, there is no signal or Wi-Fi here, but the smartphone is working. Thanks to that I can hear music or play game, it's useful to kill time. It'll be scary when my stockpile of battery and charger is gone though."

He smoothly spoke of terminologies that could only be heard at earth.

The young man was obviously the same human like Rokuhara Ren or Toba Riona.

"Young man, I ask you one thing."

Apollo spoke.

"There is no mistake that this place is a singular point of diverse worlds isn't it?"

"That's right. This is a special territory in order to observe the countless existing mythological worlds and the space distortions that are the gate to them. We call this place the 《observatory》."

"I believe that previously there was someone else taking residence here though?"

"You mean the previous custodian. That guy was made to take day off."

The black haired young man smirked.

His smirk was really impudent and filled with hidden meaning.

"Well, he was reluctant to go to a vacation, so he got his ass kicked for a bit—not that, he was given a little bit of push on the back, but at the end he gladly handed over his role. For the time being, I'm the person in charge of this observatory."

"Oo. So you have confidence in your skill."

"Please don't joke. You are a god or hero from somewhere right? I'm not so stupid to boast about my skill in front of someone like you."

The young man must be sensing the divine atmosphere of the sun god Apollo.

Even though he didn't even introduce himself as god, the young man said something like this. However, he didn't show any sign of flinching in front of the radiant god. He also didn't do any flattery. He also didn't look scared.

Apollo smiled at the really courageous young man.

"I understand. Then let me ask you newcomer. Which one is the gate to the sanctuary that we are seeking—I wish you to teach us by all means."

Apollo looked up.

Countless dots of light were blinking like stars decorating the night sky. Just some time ago the sun god himself said that all of those were gates of sanctuary.

On the other hand, the black haired young man frowned,

"That attitude of trying to conclude with [I'll leave it up to you] like that, I don't really like it."

"Hou?"

"Speak in a more concrete way. What kind of world do you want to go to?"

"Certainly. Then Princess Cassandra, tell him. The world that you saw in your vision—my birthplace Hyperbore, what kind of place it was."

"Ye, yes-"

Cassandra was flustered when the talk was suddenly turned toward her.

The young man who had been sitting down all this time suddenly stood up and said "Wait for a bit" before entering into the shrine. They waited for a while like that—

He returned bringing a long wooden coffer on his right shoulder.

Surprisingly, it was a large long coffer that was as tall as the young man.

It was created from wooden material that looked really thick and heavy. Even if the inside was empty, it should be really heavy. And yet,

The young man who was shouldering it was walking with light steps.

He walked straight toward Cassandra without any stagger in his steps. On top of that he placed down the long coffer with a smooth movement. Using one hand casually!

Zushin. It was a really heavy sounding sound.

He was an owner of absurd physical strength—no, that wasn't it.

Even though she looked like this Cassandra was well versed in martial arts too. She somehow sensed it.

Wasn't this stunt possible exactly because he had trained, trained, trained till the extreme his legs and loins with training that went off the rails and obtained an unshakable physique like a large tree no matter when and where?

Could it be—Cassandra thought.

Even if the man with largest body in Troia tackled with all his strength,

The black haired young man would stop it calmly without even getting moved for an inch wouldn't he—.

"Look at this thing, princess."

"Oh my. It's some kind of scroll isn't it?"

Inside the long coffer that the young man opened, there were a lot of thin paper scrolls inside.

There wasn't any paper like this in her birthplace Troia. However, she had seen and touched this kind of paper a lot at Rokuhara Ren's world.

Cassandra nodded. The black haired young man said to her.

"My master—in other words my boss possess
one of the six supernormal Buddhist powers
unimpeded bodily function as well as artistic taste. She peered into thousands and tens of thousands of space distortions one after another and checked each and every one of them what kind of world they're connected to. At that time she would draw the scenery she saw into these scrolls."

"There is a person who accomplished such grand feat!?"

"Nn, well, she is someone possessing both wisdom and courage, an outrageous genius of everything. She would paint with touch of realism in a flash relying only on her memory."

Those should be words that were extolling the[king] he was serving.

However, the young man spoke it with a fed-up expression instead.

Because the Troia princess thought that it was strange, she noticed. Come to think of it, this young man wouldn't meet Cassandra's eyes even once.

In that case, she peered into the young man's face—he averted his gaze.

"Excuse me. Have I done something that offended your feeling?"

"No, not at all. Don't mind me. I just don't like any[woman]. More importantly, quickly search for scenery that you have recollection of."

"Ye, yes."

Cassandra reached out into the long coffer while in bewilderment.

When she untied the scroll that was tied with string, a scenery that was drawn with only black ink appeared before her eyes. The scene was vividly described with delicate brush stroke.

A picture of desolate desert. A picture of humid jungle.

A picture of island with stone statues modeled after human head lined up.
A picture of horses and wolves running through endless plain. Picture.
Picture. Picture. Picture. Picture—

The young man was taking out long coffers filled with picture scrolls one after another.

Cassandra found “it” inside the third long coffer.

"There is no mistake.....this is the one!"

The ocean spread out, with islands of various sizes scattered about sporadically—.

She yelled while staring at that scroll. Right after that, roaring sound and vibration[GOGOGOGOGOGO-!] came from under her feet.

And then, the countless light dots blinking above—were rapidly approaching.

The sun god Apollo muttered with an impressed tone.

"Hou. So we're approaching the sanctuary's gate along with this shrine too."

"Yeah. It's the work of my master. If you find the space distortion you're looking for, this stopping place that looks like an asteroid will fly until there automatically. Convenient right?"

"It seems that your teacher is a grand sorcerer that rival even the gods."

"Well yeah. There'll be nothing to be complained about if she also has proper personality though."

For some reason the young man sighed at Apollo's praise toward his master.

In any case, a cluster of light was sparkling above Cassandra and others when they noticed. It was something that they had seen multiple times until now.

Countless lights converged on it and emitted sparkling like a nebula.

The phenomenon called as space distortion by Rokuhara Ren and others. The gate to a sanctuary. An entrance connected to other world—.

.

"They've gone."

The black haired young man murmured.

The golden haired handsome young man and silver haired beautiful princess who unexpectedly came here had departed several minutes ago.

"This time a god or hero from somewhere went to “that world”."

He was alone once more in the[observatory of space distortions].

He shrugged in that extremely isolated territory and commented seriously.

"It's just like what honorable uncle said, that place is really special. Even my master specifically made me to stand guard here!"

.

2

Kansai Airport—.

It was in a lounge of an airline company.

"Hey Julio."

Rokuhara Ren spoke to the leader of Campiones association sitting beside him.

"We really have to return to Valencia no matter what? Rather than that I want to go save Cassandra."

An easily carried away person who was always easygoing. It would be fine to call that as Rokuhara Ren's trait.

However right now he was looking really dissatisfied. He even expressed a very little amount of irritation while talking to Julio Blandelli.

"We've to quickly search Apollo-san who vanished to somewhere."

"I understand your feeling but calm down. We don't know where is that Apollo at, so first thing first we should return to our headquarter and prioritize gathering information."

In contrast Julio was calm like usual.

But Ren showed an expression of discontent even toward the advice of his reliable friend.

"You're right but, right now I want to do things like in the old detective drama. It doesn't feel like I'll be able to stay still for many hours inside airplane to Europe!"

"Old detective drama? Was it Japan's drama?"

"Yep. To search for the criminal, the detective will generally run through the city. Then, while running the investigation will progress by itself and the truth of the incident is coming near."

"The theme song will be playing while the detective is running isn't it."

Riona nodded. Of course she remembered the drama of howling to the sun.

And then, she was utterly impressed. Even her goshujin-sama that possessed all three of jovial, energy, and carefree attitudes also had times when he would be irritated.

Even he who would only show easygoing attitude all the time could be like this!

Rokuhara Ren right now was similar to a sulking child. Riona spoke to soothe him down.

"I'm also worried about Princess Cassandra. But, let's return to the headquarter for now while the airplane can be used. Even this airport was closed until yesterday before it's finally resuming activity now."

"Yes. Natural disasters are occurring frequently all over the world."

Julio also added.

"It's really unsure how long the airplanes and ships will be usable. Abnormal weather, earthquake, tsunami, typhoon—Ren, the “end of the world” that we saw isn't that far from now."

"......Got it."

Ren finally let the tension left his shoulders in resignation.

"For now I'll stay quiet on the airplane's seat."

"You do that. The Institution of Divinities has considerately prepared the first class seat. The level of comfort should be good."

"Roger. I'll clear up this pent-up feelings completely sooner or later."

Rokuhara Ren muttered smoothly.

It was a casual tone that even sounded indifferent.

But the eyes of the godslayer that was staring to empty air were containing the light of firm determination. Perhaps he—was looking at the

shadow of the arch-enemy who he was vowing to find someday.

(Rokuhara-san, he is angry?)

Riona tried to secretly imagine.

How would her goshujin-sama behaved when he met the sun god Apollo once more? But she still had never seen him enraged. It was difficult to imagine.

On the other hand, there was also a noble who elegantly smiled.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha. Calm down a bit, godslayer."

Shoutoku Taishi aka Uyamado no Ouji's—ghost.

The slim and androgynous handsome man had aesthetical appearance.

As an imperial family member of the ancient Japan, he was clad in a robe of orange color for the crown prince. Even if the fact that he was a ghost was omitted, he gave a strong atmosphere of otherworldliness.

"This Apollo kidnapped the silver haired princess due to some kind of expectation. He won't do anything cruel to her."

"We don't know that."

Ren retorted to the graceful Umayado no Ouji.

"Even if he doesn't take her life, he might make her go through something horrible."

"But, Apollo said[I'll guarantee her safety] when he kidnapped the princess. In that case, that was his oath as god. O heard that he is a divine spirit of the highest class. An act that lightly break the oath he personally made—is impossible."

"Why?"

"It might lead to him personally dirtying the nobility, the loftiness of his soul that is making him a god. If he commit such foolishness, his root as sacred god at the end will—waver."

"You mean it will be an identity crisis for him."

‘I see’, Riona comprehended. Umayado no Ouji spoke further.

"Umu. The strength of a god who appears on the surface world is decided by[how unwavering the self that he possess is]. How far his determination is to carry out his desire—even if he has to destroy all mankind of remake the heaven and earth to achieve it. Know that it’s directly related to a god’s strength."

"I see....."

Rokuhara Ren finally spoke with a refreshed face.

"I get it. For now I’ll believe on the crown prince’s word."

"Saying for now is unneeded. Understand it that the wise saying of I who am filled with imperial virtue is equal to the teaching of the great Buddha."

"Excuse me....."

Umayado no Ouji made a “smug look” with a handsome look that was similar with the image of Maitreya Bodhisattva.

There was a girl who timidly spoke to the legendary imperial prince of the ancient Japan.

"I understand that the world is in danger and Cassandra-san is in a pinch but.....why am I going to Europe too?"

Toba Fumika, the little sister of Toba Riona.

She was sitting on the seat inside the lounge nervously. She was the reincarnation of Tamayori Hime who possessed the disposition as spirit

medium. She was a possessor of spiritual power that originated from the lineage of Kamo clan like Riona.

The spirit of Umayado no Ouji told the timid looking Fumika straightly.

"Of course, you're coming as my helper. Strive hard as Tamayori no Hime."

"But but! En no Gyouja-sama has returned back to the realm of the dead a long time ago. He said[It's tiring to stay in the world of the living]. It'll be dangerous if your highness doesn't quickly return!"





"My status as spirit is higher than the ascetic. I can still stay on the surface world."

Umayado no Ouji hid his mouth with his sleeve while speaking gracefully.

"If the danger of destruction doesn't only approach Japan but the whole world, it's also the duty of the imperial family to offer the hand of salvation to the populace. I shall pitch in and help."

"But! Didn't your highness say it before this!?"

The Europe voyage that was done under emergency situation.

It seemed the cowardly Fumika feared that and became desperate in her insistence.

"Your highness is a spirit with really deep spiritual tie to Japan, so if you leave this country, perhaps you will become unable to come out to the[front]! Won't it be meaningless to go the——"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha. It's alright."

Umayado no Ouji laughed with his usual gracefulness and eluded the question.

"Even so if I enter your body, I might be able to give advice at least. Well, if even that is impossible then I'll just enjoy the pleasure jaunt."

"E, even though we're going to Europe not for sightseeing—"

"You see, actually I've been wanting to tour the foreign countries since the time when I was alive. It's truly delightful that finally my dearest wish will come true."

"Uuuu-. As I thought that's your true motive....."

Fumika's shoulders dropped. Umayado no Ouji paid her no attention.

Riona listened to the exchange of the two while muttering.

"The prince is of unknown quantity as a battle strength, but his existence is reassuring. Let's have Fumika act as his helper for a while."

"We can also put some expectation on Fumika's spirit medium technique."

Julio prioritized utility rather than emotion and he also nodded.

Setting aside the agitation of one girl, the flight time was approaching near.

.

"It looks like the plane has departed just as scheduled."

"So Ren-san and others has gone."

At the outskirts of Kyoto, Arashiyama.

Within a Japanese room that lied deep inside the headquarter of Institution of Divinities, Seishuun Maki was facing Takatsukasa Hinako who had become the "leader" both on name and reality.

Hinako-sama who was dressed in kimono like usual spoke with worry.

"It'll be great if they can return safely....."

"In my—in Seishuun house there is this saying, [The enemy of godslayer is god or fellow godslayer. Danger to the world is lying in wait no matter where they go]."

"Aa"

Hinako-sama was reminded of something by the words of the daughter of Seishuun House.

"Your house has associated with Blandelli House of Campiones association since a long time ago wasn't it? Since the time when the founder of that association was still alive."

"My ancestor studied abroad to Europe. It seemed that he became close with the godslayer then....."

Seishuui Maki spoke of the old tale that she learned by hearsay.

"It seems my ancestor was allowed to have audience with the previous generation devil king."

"My"

"By the way reports came from all branches of Institution of Divinities. Every spiritual sight user of class 4 above are seeing the omen of[national crisis that will arrive soon]....."

"Soon—will it be in one year, or perhaps half a year....."

"It will be great if it's not in half a month or one month though....."

"Now that you mention it, the shaking this morning was also quite serious....."

Hinako-sama who was past middle-aged and Maki who was in her twenty.

The two women with distant age sighed together and worried about the way the world was heading.

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3

Thus, Ren and others returned by flight that took more than twenty hours.

They arrived at Valencia Airport. Although its presence was a bit lacking as an airport inside Spain, they could go immediately to the center of Valencia City where their stronghold was located.

A car of Campiones association came to pick them up.

Right after the car drove toward the city, Julio sitting on the front passenger seat looked at his wristwatch.

"It's still slightly before 2 P.M. Let's go to the headquarter right away."

"Uuu-. Even though I'm finally at Spain, it's regretful that this is only like snapshot travel of variety show....."

Fumika was dejected at the second row seat inside the large car that could be filled with eight people.

In contrast, her big sister who was sitting beside her Riona told her smoothly.

"By the way, I had sightsee around a lot last time I was here."

"O, Onee-chan you meanie-. You don't need to boast at this kind of time."

"After we save earth from the danger of destruction, I'll let Fumika to also have vacation as you please. Work hard in assisting Umayado no Ouji."

"But his highness, he isn't saying anything since the plane took off flying."

The noble ghost right now was[inside] the Tamayori Hime, Toba Fumika.

Just like at the fight with Susanoo, by fusing with Fumika who possessed real body, he was able to maintain a stable state—in theory.

Riona pondered.

"As expected it's difficult for him to come to the surface when he is outside Japan."

"I feel that he at least hasn't vanished though."

Also, behind the Toba sisters, Rokuhara Ren was sitting on the third row seat.

He monopolized the seating there by himself and stared outside the window unusually quiet. It didn't look like he was in a daze from feeling languid and sleepy because of jet lag.

Riona secretly observed her goshujin-sama through the rearview mirror.

He also didn't talk much inside the plane. His atmosphere was similar to an athlete who was gradually focusing more in preparation toward the coming big match.

(His mood is clearly different from usual.....)

Riona thought. The usual Rokuhara Ren would be "like a prince" all the time. Even her handsome face would be neutralized by his easygoing and shallow attitude. For better or worse it was easy to get close to him.

However, his current atmosphere——

(He is more than fitting enough for the prince role isn't it.....)

Would it be a good thing or a bad thing at the end?

While Riona harbored both expectation and anxiety and felt bewildered,

"Which reminds me"

Julio who left the driving to his subordinate and sat on the front passenger seat spoke.

"There is a sentence that is passed down within our Campiones association. [One day the manifestation of gate connected to mythological

world will become frequent, and unprecedented danger will attack the world—perhaps. Never let your guard down], it said."

"Hmph. Then, the situation has become just like that warning now."

Ren replied from the seat at the back.

His voice and expression wasn't light like usual.

His voice sounded around thirty percent more sweet and beautiful than usual—. Her little sister beside her seemed to think the same thing and whispered into her ear.

(Rokuhara-san, he has a voice that make me want to have him say various things. Actually)

(Please don't hand me a list of strange speech. I don't want to be witness of a scene with that person as savage seme or seducing uke.) (TN: Seme is the dominant partner of homosexual relationship while uke is the submissive one)

(Wa-, wait Onee-chan-. Even I won't suddenly ask something like that!)

(Sooner or later you surely will-)

The godslayer of this generation ignored the conversation of the sisters and conversed with the commander-in-chief.

"The saying can be traced back to the dawn of the association. The godslayer who was our founder, Caesar Blandelli and his aides seemed to leave behind those words."

"Even though it will be fast if we can directly ask the people in the past all sorts of things."

Ren commented to the present boss who talked about the history of the organization.

"That founder person, how many years ago he lived?"

"The era of my ancestor Caesar was the 19th century. It's more than 150 years ago. But Ren, actually you can talk with a higher-up of Campiones association of that time."

"Eh, how!?"

"That person is far more knowledgeable than me in regard to the gods and godslayer. There'll be no harm in trying to ask that person regarding the world that the sun god Apollo mentioned he is heading to."

Julio said to the driver "Change of destination".

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"Hou. Hyperborea you say."

The female knight spoke with dignified voice that was filled with springiness.

Even her nodding gesture was solemn and overflowing with dignity. They were told that she was an existence who had protected the successive generations of Blandelli House's head including Julio until now.

"Queen, please teach us if you know something."

"Long—in a very long time ago, I heard that name from somewhere. I don't know the detail. That's the only thing that I can say. Forgive me, o descendant of my master."

The protector spirit who answered Julio had an alias of White Queen.

She was a beauty dressed like man. She was wearing a chainmail, a helmet, and then a white mantel. A long sword was hanging on her waist. She was fully equipped.

Honey colored blonde hair was kept under her helmet.

Her face, voice, and also bearing, everything displayed her as a dignified and beautiful female knight.

"This person is Julio's protector spirit?"

"I am not quite human. Once I was a god. Because of reasons, I became Caesar Blandelli's knight and right now I'm protecting his descendant."

The White Queen replied to Ren's words.

"This is the first time I show myself in front of you, Rokuhara Ren."

"The lightning attack that Julio sometimes fired down was by using Onee-san's power was it? I was also saved thanks to that."

Ren said his gratitude.

They were in a small chapel at the outskirts of Valencia City.

There was a big mansion and several detached buildings within the same ground. This was a chapel with colorful stained glasses decorating it, but there was almost nothing else inside.

The only exception was the Doomsday Clock—.

A round mechanical clock with diameter around three meters placed on a pedestal. It was showing that the time was 23:50.

When its hands pointed at twelve o'clock, it was said that the end of the world would come.....

Ren had also seen the watch several times. However, he didn't know that there was a female knight protector spirit in that safekeeping place.

"It's reassuring to have Onee-san as ally but, there is no clue to search for Apollo huh."

Ren lamented, then he glanced at his best friend.

"Does Julio know anything?"

"There is this kind of legend. Right after Apollo was born, he was ordered by his father Zeus to head to the holy land Delphi. But the son ignored it and headed to a region called Hyperborea. It's said that Apollo stayed at that land for one year."

"He was suddenly ordered right after he was born?"

"Yeah. The reason isn't mentioned. At that [country located beyond the north wind] that was hard to be called as civilized, Apollo laid down the law, and bestowed order to the people. That's the reason it's said that Hyperborea was that god's birthplace."

"Law.....law huh. That story is a bit unlike Apollo-san."

That was Ren's frank impression. However Julio didn't agree.

"No. From time immemorial, Apollo who possessed moderation and reasoning power in abundance was considered as [the idealized image of young man]. I think it's not unreasonable that he has an aspect of [law's creator]. Well, in Greek mythology he is only the god of archery, the god of music, the god of medicine, the god of prophecy, and the god of stock-farming, he has no disposition as god of law."

Julio spoke in continuation. Ren grumbled.

"That's a lot of title."

"That's how popular he is as a god who possess ancient history."

"Hm?"

Riona tilted her head at the side while the men were having a talk.

"Come to think of it, where did Fumika go?"

.

"Why is my heart beating his fast.....?"

Fumika muttered while wandering.

They didn't even stop by at the metropolis Barcelona that had an airport and came straight to Valencia. But they didn't head to the center of the province that was famous for its orange and paella and instead came to the outskirts that only had vast farms like Japan's countryside.

She was on the grounds of a mansion located in a hard-to-reach place without any neighbors.

Her big sister and Rokuhara Ren were inside a small chapel at the corner. However, Fumika was driven by a strange premonition in her chest and went alone.

She was heading to the largest building on this ground.

It was a two-story mansion. She went until the entrance and her hand moved toward the heavy and thick wooden door.

".....This is, no good."

Fumika pulled her hand back.

Even like this she was the spirit medium of the highest class, Tamayori Hime. She was also reasonably trained by her big sister Riona's education. Fumika's spiritual sense quickly sensed it.

"The door is sealed with a transcendently strong protection technique, absolutely. If I try to open it, a dangerous divine punishment at the level of Tutankhamun's curse will come down on me."

As expected from an important place of Europe's veteran association Campiones.

They had no intention to allow any illegal intrusion. Fumika easily gave up.

"Eh!?"

Some words suddenly floated in her mind.

[Seken koke, yuibutsu zeshin]

The world after all was something transient, the only truth was Buddha—.

Those should be the words that Shoutoku Taishi aka Umayado no Ouji liked. And then, spell words were automatically slipping out from Fumika's mouth.

"The precept of non killing must not be violated!"

In short [Thy shall not kill].

Fumika gasped. There was no doubt. Umayado no Ouji who was residing in her body—the wise man that was rarely seen even in the history of Japan was bestowing her a divine protection!

And then, she reached toward the door in front of her—.

DOOOOOOON! DOOOOOOON! DOOOOOOON!

Thunder roared three times.

"FUEEEEEEH!?"

Fumika covered her head with both her hands thinking that she was struck by the lightning of divine punishment.

However, it seemed there was some kind of Buddha's divine protection on her. She was completely unharmed. Fumika hurriedly opened the door and entered the mansion.

Giiiiiii—

The door made a sound and opened without any trouble.

"E, excuse me....."

She entered inside timidly.

Now then, where should she go to inside here—The instant she pondered that.

"So, someone is calling?"

.....re.

.....ver here.

.....Over here—.

Over here, over here. She felt a voice calling her like that. It wasn't through hearing, the voice was calling to Fumika's spiritual ability.

Someone lurking inside this mansion seemed to notice Toba Fumika's intrusion.

"Uwa. I absolutely don't want to go—fu, fueeeeh!?"

Her legs automatically moved toward the direction of the calling voice.

"Your highness, you're awful! Even though I want to leave right away!"

The one controlling Fumika's body was of course Umayado no Ouji.

As expected from the legendary sacred prince. Even outside Japan, he was able to do something like taking over Tamayori Hime when it counted.

"I, if something frightening is waiting there, what am I going to do-!?"

Her feet didn't stop walking even when she complained. She walked until the deepest room at the second floor.

Click. When she opened the door, it was a bedroom.

There was a queen sized bed with canopy attached. Numerous tasteful furniture. Also, there was a brown skinned maiden lying down on the bed.

"Eh?"

The sleeping maiden was wearing a white pajama.

She was black haired. She also had lovely and adorable face.

Her age was most likely at her later teenage. Her slender limbs were really glamorous. The like of her slender big sister Riona couldn't possibly be a match against her in the point of volume.

And then, beside the bed of the sleeping maiden—

Another girl materialized with a pop and grinned.

(Welcome, please come in. It has been a long time since a guest came.)

"Fueeeeee!?"

Fumika bent back in shock.

The girl who suddenly appeared beside the bed looked exactly the same like the sleeping maiden. However, this one's body was faintly transparent.

Ghost—no. Fumika discerned with Tamayori Hime's instinct.

This was a living spirit. The soul of the maiden sleeping on the bed slipped out of her body and materialized.

.

4

(You're a bit strange aren't you?)

The living spirit of the sleeping maiden sniffed with her nose even though she was a spirit.

She was trying to sniff the body odor of the bewildered Fumika.

(Presence and atmosphere that are attracting an existence like me..... I assume that you are undoubtedly a really excellent spirit medium-. Looks like you can call the spirit of your ancestor from that world with 100% success rate and make the spirit to possess yourself!)

"Yo, you understand that?"

(Yes—. It has been a long time since I became this kind of existence. I'm a great veteran!)

Fumika responded to the cheerfulness of the grinning maiden with a stiff forced smile.

The girl's rhythm was too casual. Almost all the ghosts that she came into contact with until now as Tamayori Hime had negative temperament. So to speak they were the [asocial type].

This maiden, and then Umayado no Ouji, recently she encountered nothing but irregular existences.....

Fumika suddenly recalled something and asked.

"Could it be, you're a really famous person?"

(M, me, famous? No no, I'm not anyone who you will know.)

"But Onee-san, your status as ghost and your presence are really strong. You don't even lose against the ghost of super famous people who I recently got acquainted with..... I'm wondering if Onee-san could be the soul of someone who leaves their name behind in history."

(I think I'm not connected to that you know—)

"Then, it's simply that Onee-san's soul is amazingly powerful."

(It's embarrassing to get praised like that. Ah, but, you. You don't know about my identity aren't you.....)

The maiden smiled shyly but then she suddenly started to fidget restlessly.

(In that case, I might want to ask you for a bit of help.....)

"A help? What do I have to do?"

(Actually, I have the curse of sleeping princess applied on me. I've been doing nothing but sleeping for a long time. But although my physical body is like this because of the curse, my heart itself is alright.)

"Normally the heart will also sleep of the body sleep.....?"

(It's a matter of spirit and guts there! Thanks to that I even learned a special technique to go "outside" like this as living spirit. But, a barrier is erected in this mansion you see.....)

"Barrier? Something that forbid spirit from coming and entering?"

(Exactly that! And, I want to consult you——)

The maiden grinned with a smile that was like the sun.

(If you don't mind can you undo the barrier? I haven't breathed the air outside for more than a hundred years. I wish you to bring me to the world of free——)

"Impossible."

(Instant answer!? Please consider it a bit more!)

"My ability other than as spirit medium is relatively lacking in training so.....I'm sorry."

Fumika apologized while secretly thinking.

Unexpectedly, if she requested Shoutoku Taishi residing inside her body, it might be possible that he would destroy the barrier for her. However.

No matter what she had this suspicion. Toward the maiden in front of her who was too cheerful.

She didn't seem like a bad person. However, perhaps she got the curse of sleeping princess applied on her exactly because there was some kind of dangerous factor in her and she was imprisoned inside a mansion that was protected with a barrier.....?

As Tamayori Hime, she frequently caught the eyes of evil spirit or revengeful ghost.

Because of that her wariness was cultivated. But the maiden's living spirit didn't even get disheartened by Fumika's rejection and doggedly begged her.

(In that case, the second request, fire-. Can I ask you to kiss the lips of the sleeping me?)

".....heh?"

(Lifting the curse with the prince's kiss. That's the standard. I wanted to try it once you know! On this occasion, I won't mind about thing like gender. Please do it with chuu-!)

"I, I, it's alright if it's BL but, I don't have any interest with yuri!"

Perhaps because Fumika replied with high tension.

The heart of Tamayori Hime—the shrine maiden that could become the receptacle of spirit Toba Fumika, and the soul of the excessively cheerful sleeping princess were starting to align.

If they exchanged words and the distance of their heart was closed, naturally their souls would also resonate.

And then, what Fumika sensed first was [the other party's tremendousness].

This living spirit of sleeping princess actually had high spiritual status that was equal or even surpassing Umayado no Ouji—she wondered if the maiden might be a type of ^{wild} ^{spirit} ara mitama.

Savage spirit of deceased person. Wicked god who summoned calamity. Anyway, ara mitama was that kind of monster.

On the other hand, the living spirit of maiden with brown skin and wearing white night-clothes was staring fixedly at Fumika. She muttered with a subdued tone.

(Hyperborea.....beyond the north wind.....)

"Eh? Onee-san, how do you know about that word!?"

Fumika was surprised. The maiden's living spirit grinned.

(I peeked slightly into your heart. You and your friends are searching for the home town where sun god Apollo was born aren't you?)

"....."

Fumika was speechless.

A resonance between two souls occurred. But she got her heart read by the other party one-sidedly. Fumika couldn't see inside the maiden's heart at all.

In other words, there was a despairing [difference of strength] between she and her—.

If it became a contest of strength, she would lose instantly. No doubt about it. The maiden's living spirit talked to the scared Fumika with a sweet grin.

(If you like, I'll give you an advice you know—)

"Advice?"

(Even though I look like this, I've traveled various worlds and eras. I'm really knowledgeable. I also know quite a lot about Apollo. I even have experience traveling until the hometown [beyond the north wind] where he was born—)

"Even Hyperborea....."

(Where did the [passage] to that world open in the past again?)

The maiden pondered. Fumika was drawn in by her words even while she was on her guard.

Right after that, the living spirit of the maiden already moved when she noticed. She was right before her eyes. She hugged Fumika who was Tamayori Hime.

Of course, a ghost without physical body couldn't possibly touch Fumika.

She intended to possess her body. Fumika had experienced the same thing multiple times. She was possessed by the spirit she resonated with. Toba Fumika's body was completely taken over.

Resonating with a spirit was a double-edged sword. It would become an impetus to instinctually understand the opponent, but it could also become an invitation to enter into her body like this—.

"Furube! Yurayura to furube!"

Fumika chanted the words of power and heightened her magic power as much as possible.

It was in order to reject the "intrusion" of the maiden. But with how despairing the difference in spiritual power between them, there was no way she could win that.

(I'll borrow your body a bit!)

The living spirit maiden was brimming with motivation to take this chance.

(I'm really sorry but, you can't make an omelet without breaking some eggs-. If I'm able to release my sleeping body, I'll pay you back for this—!)

"You said for a bit but, how long will it be-!?"

(If it goes quickly then it will be 2 or 3 days.....but if it drag on then it might be 4 or 5 years?)

"Fueeeeh!?"

When Fumika almost fell into despair, a scolding voice entered her ears—was what she felt.

[There is survival within the fatal situation! Understand that this adversity is exactly a good opportunity!]





It was the beautiful voice of Umayado no Ouji.

And then, the spiritual body of the living spirit maiden that should have instantly entered into Tamayori Hime was unable to do just that for some reason. She stayed hugging Fumika's body in surprise.

(Oh!? You also have a protector spirit with you!?)

"God of swiftly galloping wind, I beg you to intermediate—. Akitsu mirror, Hetsu mirror, Yakka sword, longevity stone, moving stone, death returning stone, path returning stone, shawl of snake, shawl of bee, shawl of various articles.....combining the ten varieties of treasure one two three four five six seven eight nine ten furube yurayura to furube—"

Fumika desperately chanted using that chance.

It was the words of power that heightened her power as the shrine maiden of soul medium. In order to peer into the other party's heart using the resonation of their souls as foothold.

—A certain name floated in her heart.

Right after that. Within her consciousness that was going hazy, she heard the voice of her big sister.

"Rinpyou tousha, kaijin rezzaizen! O spirit that attempt wickedness, withdraw back!"

The living spirit of the maiden who was clinging on her body vanished. Fumika lost consciousness after seeing that.

.

"Taishi-sama brought Fumika-chan until here—in other words, it's that kind of thing?"

Ren asked.

It was the room where Toba Fumika confronted a mysterious living spirit. A brown skinned maiden was lying on a queen sized bed while fast asleep.

Although Fumika had awakened just now, she was still in a daze.

Beside her, her big sister Riona spoke.

"I believe so. He is the holy man of ^{Bountiful Wise Ear} Toyoto Mimi who learn the future before it happen after all. He must have used foresight or spiritual sight to learn that there is an important clue here and lead us here."

Fumika spoke the name of a certain place right after she recovered her consciousness.

She mentioned that there might be an entrance to the mythological world Hyperborea there. The middle school girl who achieved this extraordinary achievement seemed to be tired, because she was only staring to empty air with an absentminded look.

Julio spoke in satisfaction.

"It's the right decision to bring her here. She proved her usefulness right away."

"But Julio. The girl sleeping over there.....who is she?"

"I also don't know."

Julio shook his head toward Ren's question.

"I was told that she is a witch who call calamity, an existence that mustn't be awakened no matter what. The queen also only told me that [Not knowing will be better for all of you]. But—regarding this sleeping princess, the founder Caesar also said this."

"What?"

"When one day a danger to the world arrive and it become a situation where there is no going back, it might be alright to try waking her up when you have nothing more to lose, he said....."

"What does that mean?"

Riona tilted her head. Julio shrugged.

"A calamity that has its trigger pulled by a trickster turning into something that can turn the situation for the better is a rare case that can also possibly happen. It's a development that can also be found sometimes in myths. When the situation is a checkmate that cannot possibly become any worse, using her as explosive to overturn everything—. I arbitrarily think that's the meaning of those words."

"It's that, like the spell in Dragon Quest. What was it again?"

"You mean Parupunte. It's also great that Fumika is safe from this."

Ren and Riona nodded to each other.

Ahead of their gaze, Fumika was still in a daze. Ren recalled the place name that she mentioned just now.

"And, where is Ararat Mountain located?"

"Along the border of Turkey and Armenia. It's famous as the place where the Noah's ark was discovered."

Ren strongly nodded after Riona taught him.

The travel for revenge against sun god Apollo could finally be started.

Chapter 2 – World of Sea and Island

1

Noah's ark—.

Even Japanese who was unfamiliar with bible or Christianity, like Rokuhara Ren for example would know it.

It was said [Because sinful humans on earth had increased too much, god caused a great flood in order to cull and decreased the number of humans. However, the chosen human Noah was told about what would happen. Noah took his whole family and every kind of animal on board of the ark that he created himself].

The place that the ark was washed ashore at was nowhere else than Ararat Mountain.....

"No, strictly speaking it's different."

Julio with his extensive knowledge added a comment.

"In the Old Testament it was said that[And on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible]. This description can also be interpreted as[a mountain somewhere in Ararat]. We cannot conclude that it's the Ararat Mountain at the present day."

The lecture was carried out while listening to the sizzling sound of cooking meat.

Eastern part of Turkey, the border city Dogubayazit. At a roadside of a small city that should be called as a simple rural city. Beside a stall that was roasting meat on charcoal fire.

A lot of tables and chairs were placed out at the main street in broad daylight.

It was a road under the sky but——

People gathered and enjoyed having meal and talking. Julio and Rokuhara Ren, and then Riona too were mixing among the people there.

The chair with fading color was made from plastic like the chair used in Japan's bathroom.

On the table that the three were sitting around, there were roasted meat of sheep, beef, and turkey seasoned with spices, slices of melon, watermelon, and orange, whole tomatoes, roasted corn, and Turkey's long and narrow bread lined up.

All of the foods were obtained from the food stalls and carts.

They arrived to the eastern part of Turkey from Spain at the morning today.

They took late lunch and had strategy meeting while Ren looked at faraway——outside the city.

"Ararat's mountains huh..... Certainly there're even two mountains that look like Fuji Mountain side by side. Eh, which one is the Ararat Mountain?"

Whether it was the ridgeline or the white snow crowning the vicinity of the mountain's summit, the two mountains were really similar with Japan's Fuji Mountain. They were stretching out like twins.

"Both of them are Ararat Mountain, which make it ambiguous and misleading."

It was Riona who answered.

"The big one is Greater Ararat Mountain, its height is a little bit under 5000 meter above sea level. The small one is Little Ararat Mountain, with height of 3900 meter above sea level. This one is similar with Fuji Mountain even in height."

"By the way, there will be other mountain to if you cross the national border."

"The north of this city Dogubayazit is Armenia territory. Originally Ararat Mountain was the symbol of Armenia people. But at the end of the World War 2 it was incorporated into the territory of this country.....it's a place with a bit complicated situation."

"It's also not permitted to enter the mountain without permission from Turkey government."

Riona and Julio informed him together.

Even climbing the mountain needed permission. However this was Julio, so surely he would manage somehow. Ren ignored the information just now and asked.

"So in the end, which mountain I should climb?"

"Actually, it doesn't look like there'll be any problem this time even if we don't climb the mountain."

"Yes. The location of space distortion that was discovered by the investigator of Campiones association is near the foot of Little Ararat Mountain."

"Then, it looks like it won't be anything really troublesome then."

"If I'm force to say, it's my little sister that might be a problem."

"We cannot expect anything from her as a combat strength after all. If possible I want her to accompany us in the infiltration into the sanctuary

this time too though."

Unlike her big sister, Toba Fumika had weak mentality. Just in case they brought her until here, but she was completely hesitating and fearful. It was unthinkable that she would agree with going to a trip into a mythological world.

Ren muttered.

"First thing first, for now we're making her sightseeing around aren't we?"

"Aah, to persuade and win her over you mean."

Julio spoke just like the sharp and able person he was.

"I sent her out of the city with a tour guide. There is Ishak Pasha Palace. It was completed through three generations of father, son, and grandson who were a Kurdish people feudal lord of Ottoman Empire in 17th century. It's a sightseeing spot where tourist can fully enjoy the atmosphere of foreign country. About this time Fumika too must be feeling fascinated by the traveling mood."

"That place seems good but, it feels somewhat lacking for a middle school girl....."

"Is that so? Near the palace there is also a fortress and mosque from that time. The historic ruins in the meadow between the mountains are also a spot where you can encounter a flock of sheep and their shepherd if you're lucky....."

Seeing the leader of Campiones looking surprised, Riona felt impressed.

"So Julio likes that kind of thing."

"I also don't dislike that. But I wonder about Fumika-chan."

A noble youth and an extraordinary prodigy, Julio Blandelli.

However, things like romance or woman's heart were outside his expertise. Ren slightly smiled wryly at Julio's slightly off opinion that was like usual. On the other hand, the big sister with Spartan policy spoke.

"Just now we saw a hammam—a Turkish bath. Let's throw that girl into it later. The signboard said that it'll also give scrubbing like in South Korea and Thai-style massage. When she goes limp after going through the full course service, I'll drug her and bring her to the mythological world while she is sleeping."

It was a really inhumane idea even though she was Fumika's biological big sister.

Ren smiled wryly and suggested an alternate plan.

"Her motivation when arriving over there will be worrying if we forcefully bring her. I'll try personally asking her a bit."

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"Books research fund?"

Fumika's eyes snapped wide open. Ren replied to her cheerfully.

After they finished their lunch and private talk, Fumika came to the table they were sitting around. Her face looked tired without any excitement of travelling abroad.

Ren winked at the middle school girl who was like that.

"Yep. Our company, or rather association has that kind of system. A member of Campiones can purchase books or videos or software that will be useful for the theme of their research with the expenses paid by the association."

Ren also received the same explanation when he was welcomed into the association.

However, he didn't like piling up private things inside his room. It was a system that Ren himself didn't make use at all.

"By the way, a colleague named Anita will use this system when buying things like Japan's anime or DVD or manga or "doujinshi".

"Fueh!? Really!?"

Fumika was shocked. Beside her Julio tilted his head.

"What is doujinshi? I've read her research expenses application before. If I remember right she wrote that it's for [advancing study of sodomism as well as modern vision culture]."

"I, it's a data that was self-published by unaffiliated researcher you know, ehehehe!"

Fumika glossed it over with a laugh, then she immediately turned back toward Ren. Her face was serious.

"Rokuhara-san. Tell me in more detail."

"Anita is an older girl born in Portugal who loves anime and game where Japanese sword can turn into human. She said that our association is nice with how flexible its way of thinking is regarding the research data. She told me that even the request to purchase materials from that kind of field will easily go through."

Julio also nodded toward Ren's additional explanation.

"Naturally. There was also research that progressed from pursuing a theme that only looks [unrelated] in a glance. The investigation of new culture shouldn't be rejected because of one-sided decision or preconception. And, with that in mind what is the relationship of that topic with homosexual love and Japanese anime?"

"So, something like that doesn't really matter-. More importantly me too!"

Fumika cut off the leader's words and pleaded.

"I might want to try joining Campiones association too....."

"Hahaha. Of course we'll warmly welcome you."

"Hooray!"

Fumika was happy because of Ren's agreement. Julio was struck with happy surprise hearing that.

".....Really? However Fumika, when I invited you several days ago, didn't you instantly answer [No matter how great the benefit is, I'll pass from anything dangerous!]?"

"I changed my mind!"

Fumika passionately insisted to Julio who looked puzzled.

"It's financially difficult for a middle school student to pursue that kind of hobby-. I also can't do any part-time job-. But if I'm using research fund, then Okaa-san also won't be able to stop me!"

"Now that you mentioned it that happened before."

Riona joined the talk.

"Our mother refused the remuneration from the Institution of Divinities."

"That's right, Onee-chan-. She said that it's still too early for a middle school student!"

"By the way I won over Kaa-san so I could manage my own salary from the Institution of Divinities since when I was still middle school student though."

"Even though it'll be great if Onee-chan used that smooth talking for your little sister's sake-"

"Be silent-. You should be able to carry out a negotiation of that level by yourself!"

Riona loudly rebuked, and then she turned toward Ren.

"Even so.....Rokuhara-san who look like a normie in a glance actually know about [doujinshi], it's really surprising."

"Actually I once freeloaded in the room of a lesbian older girl who loves BL."

".....Ha?"

Riona blinked in surprise. Ren grinned.

"I'm normal after all and she also wasn't someone I was romantically involved with. When I offered to do work in exchange for paying rent, I was recruited to help with polishing off doujinshi manuscript. I was also taught to use Clip Studio perfectly."

"Wait, you mean manga manuscript!?"

"When she want assistant to help before an event, she would call me every time. I'm skillful at that even though I look like this. She even told me [I've nothing else to teach you] at the end."

Ren winked and boasted about his special skill.

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2

The sun had gone down greatly.

Ren and co left the city of Dogubayazit.

This place was a national border. It was bordered with Armenia at the north and Iran at the east.

Along with several members of Campiones association that Julio called here, they rode separately using several cars and arrived at the border with Iran.

It was a plain with good visibility and undulating hill that were continuing without end.

There were few trees. However, there were meadows here and there. This was a land where nomads riding their horse were flourishing. Even now it wasn't rare to see shepherd here.

In a corner of such plain——

A crater with diameter of 35 meter suddenly opened up. Ren asked.

"Is this, a trace of meteorite? I heard in the city that there was one that fell here more than a hundred years ago."

If he took one more step, he would fall headlong first to the bottom of the large hole.

He talked with Julio after approaching the crater until that near. The commander-in-chief of Campiones association shrugged.

"Actually that story seems to be a fake."

"Oops. So that's one tourist spot gone."

"The truth is dubious, but there isn't a single scientific proof of it. Anyway it was a pit that was 60 meter deep and later on it was filled up until the depth became half. However——"

"Right now the bottom of the hole cannot be seen huh."

Inside the big hole that Ren and Julio were looking down into.

Countless lights were blinking there, shining brilliantly like a nebula.

Space distortion—. User of spiritual sight from Campiones association who investigate the surrounding of Ararat Mountain said that there was an out of place feeling here. After that when they purified this crater using spell and prayer with several people, it came out. The gate toward a sanctuary.

And then today, Rokuhara Ren finally entered the scene—.

"Oh. Riona returned."

A blue swallow flew out from the glittering space distortion.

The small migratory bird nimbly moved in front of Ren and others and turned into the form of a high school girl. Becoming Toba Riona who was wearing her usual blazer as her battle clothes.

"I've finished scouting. There is a mythological world at the other side just as expected."

Riona asserted. But she immediately frowned.

"But, which myth is reproduced in this world—is unclear. It's a bit difficult to confirm it in a short time of scouting....."

"What kind of special trait this world has?"

Julio asked. Riona answered with a troubled face.

"That's.....there is only sea. I tried flying for thirty minutes searching for land, but I couldn't find even a single island."

"Looks like we will need to travel it genuinely in order to learn the world's true state of affairs."

"That's just what I wish for. Let's enter right away."

Ren immediately declared, but Julio stared straight at him.

"If I can speak my true feeling—there is no rational reason to send you into there. If the danger to the world is approaching, then the godslayer Rokuhara Ren ought to stay on earth. You're the only hope that can possibly stand against the threat that would attack earth soon."

"That might be so. But I'm going. I'll bring back Cassandra."

Ren said without the slightest hesitation.

"For me, both the world and the princess who is like my little sister, all of them are important."

"That's a thinking that I find really hard to understand. Foolish and illogical. Although she is the prophet of Greek mythology, I don't think she has that much value."

Julio apathetically spoke many words that denied Ren, and then—

He quietly held out his right hand.

"But, as you're the [king], I and Campones association will obey your decision with everything we have. You can act following what your heart wish and bring about great chaos to earth and mythological world as well as a slight hope."

"Roger. My big thanks to this [loyalty]of yours."

Ren smiled and clasped the right hand of his outspoken confidant.

Riona muttered in front of the exchange between fellow men.

"Julio is also a strange person yourself. Even though you belong to the logical faction more than anyone, at the end you leave everything to Rokuhara-san who belong to the instinct faction—"

"Because that's how someone who is serving a devil king should be."

Julio said that as though it was only natural.

"No matter how much wisdom I obtained, in the end it's just the shallow thinking of a shrewd human. It will only be kicked away like pebble before the unruly devil king. There isn't any human who can control the godslaying beast. Risk your whole body and soul to follow the king, use your wisdom to adapt yourself to the moment and balance the situation—that's the family precept that has been passed down through generations of our Blandelli House."

"Did Julio's ancestor taught something like that?"

"That's right Ren. And then that teaching is likely to be correct. After I personally witnessed you and that marquis.....the actual godslayers, I myself come to think that this teaching is indeed correct."

Julio asserted with conviction, and then he glanced at the only woman among them.

"Riona is also the same person of logical faction like me. Why are you able to accept Ren's course of plan?"

"It's simple for me."

The reincarnation of Yatagarasu answered easily.

"I'm one in body and soul with Rokuhara-san after all. A wife should do her husband's bidding and vice versa. Our relationship should be win-win for each other. Besides"

"She doesn't really show it at the surface, but Riona is also worried."

"Shut up goshujin-sama. Well, I don't hate that happy-go-lucky princess at all. If she was forcefully kidnapped, then going to save her is also the moral way of life."

Riona declared as a proud queen.

"The power to do that—is something we have after all."

"Yosh. Then we're going to temporarily name the mythological world this time as Sanctuary Hyperborea."

Julio changed the topic as befitting the leader of the association.

"We're going to form an exploration team right away. Ren and Riona will naturally be included——"

"E, excuse me-!"

Fumika came running in a hurry.

"My heart is feeling really restless, perhaps Taishi-sama is warning me about something——wait, aaaaaaa, look at that!"

The girl who might be matching her big sister by wearing middle school sailor uniform pointed at the distance.

The greater and little Ararat Mountains that looked similar with Fuji Mountain.

The sun had moved near the two mountain summits that were decorated with pure white snow, dyeing them with vivid orange color. The sun would set soon.

And then, within the light of the setting sun, a human silhouette descended from the sky.

It was approaching rapidly. The precise size was unclear, but it seemed to be quite gigantic. The silhouette looked quite clear even from the surface.

"There're wings growing..... Could it be that's an angel?"

Ren focused his eyes and muttered.

A beautiful form clad in simple white robe holding a somewhat small sword appeared from between the clouds and descended to earth——furthermore toward the crater where Ren and others were at.

The person had a terrifyingly well ordered face. It was unclear whether they were man or woman.

And then, he or she had pure white wings growing from their back.

It was an existence that Rokuhara Ren completely perceived as [angel]. Julio folded his arms and pondered.

"Thinking back, Ararat Mountain is a holy land that is connected to the Old Testament. If a space distortion is occurring there, then even the divine spirit of this land might get awakened too—. We should have expected this."

"We called that angel here-!?"

"I wonder about that. The [end of the world] should be soon after all. Even without us doing anything, the possibility that they'll still come down from heaven by themselves is big."

Fumika was getting into panic, while her big sister was staying calm.

Rokuhara Ren—said "How troubling" and scratch his head.

"I'm feeling a heated gaze from that angel. I think that the angel is falling in love with me at first sight, or they find me offensive and want to brutalize me."

"God and godslayer are arch-enemy. Surely the angel want to do the latter one."

Riona pointed out right away.

The wind kept getting stronger and blowing with whistling sound. The fighting spirit that was released from the angel could also be felt granting momentum to the air.

Ren resigned himself and sighed.

"Can't be helped. I'll take care of this as fast as possible before we go into Hyperborea. It'll be nice if the angel isn't too tough."

"No. If the angel is directing will to fight toward you, then we can just make them lost their target."

Julio stopped him. Ren asked.

"What do you mean?"

"Jump into the space distortion right away. I'll do something about the rest. Rescue Princess Cassandra quickly and come back. In order to stand against the destruction of the world!"

"Julio....."

"Ple, please wait a second-. If the godslayer Rokuhara-san is gone, then certainly that angel too might feel appeased!"

Fumika who had become an interim member of Campiones desperately expressed her opinion to the commander-in-chief.

"But, if that doesn't happen——!?"

"Certainly. But don't worry. That angel's divine aura is tremendous, but it's not to a hopeless degree. I think that they're low class as an angel, in a level of subordinate god. We'll be able to deal with them if we use the Holy Grail."

Holy Grail. The trump card of Campiones association.

It was kept in secret in the cathedral of their stronghold Valencia. Julio spoke its name. It was a corpse of a god who died on earth and used as a pool of immense amount of magic power.

Using that power, they could summon——

Ren guessed his friend's intention. Riona nodded to him.

"Let's go Rokuhara-san."

"Yeah. Of course you and Fumika-chan will come too!"

"Uuu-, so I'm going too as expected."

"That's the natural personnel selection. If possible I should also come too, but as the commander-in-chief there is a mountain of work that I have to do in this world. But seeing how you'll be going to an unknown sanctuary Hyperborea, I wish that a capable supporter will come with Ren."

"Yes. It's perfect if Umayado no Ouji also come as a set. We're going!"

"Fueeeeh!?"

Riona held her little sister's shoulder without listening to her complaint and they jumped together.

They jumped toward the crater in front of them, to the vortex of light of the space distortion. Ren made a thumb up and grinned to his trusted friend before following after the sisters right away—.

.

"They're gone."

Julio saw of the three departing and smiled.

The whirlwind was getting even stronger. It was already a hurricane of the highest order.

However, as someone with the status of high class magician, he applied the protection spell from wind on his body. Thanks to that he was able to stand up somehow.

The low class angel who descended from heaven was about eight meter tall.

The angel would descend on the ground if there were 50 or 60 more seconds.

Even though their arch-enemy the godslayer had gone, the angel was still emitting an intense divine aura. As though they were making a threat. Their fighting spirit was still not settling down.

As expected, he should prepare to intercept the angel.

Julio summoned his family's inheritance magic sword. The sword of lion Cuore de Leone that had been passed down since the era of his ancestor Caesar. It was a one handed broad sword.

But, the strongest inheritance that his ancestor left behind was—

"O ancient war god of spear! Receive the blessing of the Holy Grail and come here!"

"Very well, beloved child."

The female knight wearing white helmet, mantle, and chainmail, the White Queen.

She appeared beside Julio in htat beautiful and gallant appearance. She held a long spear in one hand and a round shield at the other. And then unusually she was riding a horse.

Straddling the sleek white horse, she was fully equipped as a knight!

"Let me say this first o scion of Blandelli House. This place—it's far from the city where the Holy Grail is stored. For now I'll draw divine power from the grail as much as possible."

The protector knight informed with a calm voice from above the horse.

"If the power dried out, then that's it. It will be nice if the power recover after it get drawn, but during that time I won't be able to protect you. Keep that in mind."

"Then there's no problem."

"Hou?"

"A war is something that is done with all one's strength at the fastest possible time. We'll be defeated in one attack or we'll win in one attack. Previously you said that after all that's the battle style of the White Queen——"

"Did I say that?"

"You did. I wish to tell my offspring that the protector knight of our house won't lie. I wish you luck."

"Hah——! A man who doesn't even has any prospect of making child is speaking nonsense!"

The queen burst into laughter while pointing the tip of her spear to the sky.

She firmly ascertained the low class angel flying down from above Ararat Mountain as a prey.

"But, I accept. Become a blowing wind and galloping down lightning, smash the enemy in one breath. Know that this is my only etiquette. Keep your eyes open and watch attentively!"





The next moment, the white goddess and her beloved horse turned into light.

They became a flash that flew in a straight line toward the low class angel. Both the knight and the horse were enveloped in dazzling white lightning.

She thrust her spear with the horse's charging force backing it and routed the enemy soldier.

It was truly a knight's charge. A streak of light rushed up from the ground and the spear pierced into the angel's stomach. The angel was thrust up higher and higher to the sky.

[Ah—aaaaaaa!!]

Yell of anguish burst out from the mouth of the low class angel.

The white knight and her horse paid that no mind and became light that continued to climb steeply. They were pushing the hostile angel vigorously to the height of the sea of cloud.

The scene was just like the reverse reproduction of falling meteor—

"So that's the full strength of the queen. It's tremendous....."

Julio was in admiration. Because usually he would save the use of Holy Grail, she would hold back her strength. But right now she was finally released from that shackle and immediately displayed this feat of strength.

The figure of the low class angel was already gone.

And then, Julio was convinced that they absolutely wouldn't return.

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The world of sea.

A world of blue ocean that was stretching out forever.

"It's the same with Sanctuary Troia that we visited before."

Riona transformed into Yatagarasu and flew through the sky with her golden wings spread wide open.

For the time being she just went straight forward. She went toward the direction that seemed to be north, travelling the sky above the ocean. She intended to do this until she found a land.

"Compared to Troia that has the Mediterranean Sea as its inspiration source, this sea is far more refreshing."

The wind and atmosphere were really cold.

The huge body of Yatagarasu that was flying in the sky was hit by the wind that felt very cold. Having said that it wasn't as chilly as Sanctuary Midgard.

To make an example based on Europe, the temperature felt closer to the north central region of Germany or France—

"The humidity level is also not that high."

Riona=Yatagarasu flew north for several dozen kilometers like that when she finally found it.

"I found a sign of island! What's more there're several of them!"

There were several small islands gathered to form an archipelago.

She flew around above the islands and overlooked it with bird eye's view. The number of the islands was six. Each of them had mountain, forest, river, and so on, and even plain.

And then—the sharp sight of the sacred bird discovered it.

Flock of goat hopping through steep mountain, sheep forming herd on gently sloping grassland, there were also deer and buffalo running through plain, the variety of birds was also a lot.

Also, beside the sheeps there were man-made objects that looked like tent.

"It seems there are humans or intelligence race in demi-human category!"

The island with tents was located at the northernmost.

It was the biggest island among the archipelago. Riona spread opened her wings and swooped down.

Hyperborea—.

It was a place name that appeared in Greek mythology. Starting from [Apollo goes toward beyond the northern wind] that Julio said, there were several episodes when this name appeared.

"One of them is [paradise legend]. Hyperborea is at the north, a paradise where sun is constantly shining. There is no winter or night, it's warm throughout the year....."

The air was cold. It didn't seem like it was warm like in myth.

"But there is also a theory of [destitute remote region at the end of north]."

In order to learn the truth of Sanctuary Hyperborea, Riona flew powerfully as sacred bird Yatagarasu.

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"You brought me to a countryside sanctuary again, Ren....."

"Hahahaha. This isn't countryside anymore but more like an empty island though. But, Riona said that she found a sign of people living there."

Stella who was sitting on the left shoulder glared at him reproachfully. Ren casually laughed.

On the other hand, Fumika was looking around fearfully. They were right in the middle of a plain. They could see a herd of sheep eating grass at far away.

"Uwaa..... I finally came until the rumored mythological world. Uuu-. Even though I want a world with lower difficulty setting because it's my first time."

"This world looks alright compared to Yomotsuhirasaka that is filled with zombies."

Riona curtly told her grumbling little sister.

Everyone was put inside the body of Yatagarasu and brought until here.

"Well, be on your guard. If this is in A Princess of Mars series, the first other world will be a Mars kingdom that is ruled by warrior race with four arms. Furthermore they will be in the middle of chaotic battle. Compared to that this is a better beginning isn't it?"

"I, it might turn into something just as harsh!"

The worrywart Fumika complained with a tearful gaze at her big sister's reassurance.

But, right now wasn't the time to care for her. Ren approached the herd of sheep with Stella riding on his shoulder.

He found a duo of adult man and a boy who seemed to be parent and child.

Both of them were riding together on a small horse. There was no saddle, but a leather mouthpiece and a rein were connected to the horse's mouth. The adult who seemed to be the parent was holding on the rein.

"He really look like a shepherd."

"Indeed. He has the appearance of a mountain shepherd."

Stella and Ren nodded to each other. The father and son on the horse were normal human. They looked like Caucasoid in earth term. They had white skin and finely chiseled features.

The father and son were watching the approaching Ren and Stella with suspicion.

They were dressed in cloak and large piece of cloth with hole at the middle for head that seemed like could be found in any region. In any case, the clothing seemed unrelated with Mediterranean area Troia that was hot.

The father was growing his goatee. His age was at his early thirty.

It was unknown what language they were using. Ren resolutely greeted in Japanese.]

"Nice to meet you. I am Rokuhara Ren. Someone in the middle of a journey. This one here is Stella."

" X X X X X. X X X X X X X X X X"

The father and son talked in a language that was unknown for both Stella and Rokuhara Ren.

They didn't know if a smiling face would become a proof of friendship in the culture here, but for the time being Ren along with the goddess of love smiled brightly while approaching.

He also casually exposed both his hands and appealed that he carried no weapon.

Anyway he didn't stimulate the other side's wariness. In order to make the first contact with the residents of the mysterious world Hyperborea a success, he intended to fully utilize his communication skill.

And then, the shepherd father and son riding on a small horse were—

"○○、△△△△△。○○○○△△△△△"

"○○○、△△！ △△△△△！ "

The adult who looked like father was looking suspicious, while the son was rattling on in excitement.

None of them showed any sign of timidity. Perhaps traveler wasn't rare here, or perhaps they were simply courageous.

And then Stella's face turned pensive while listening to the words of the father and son—

From Ren's left shoulder she suddenly yelled "○○○○、△△△△△！ ".

She used the same language like the father and son and talked cordially with a smile like flower that was just as expected from the goddess of love.

.

"I'm gradually comprehending what everyone is saying."

"Me too. Soon we will be able to go even without Stella's translation."

"I, I'm still no good..... Uuu-, I'm feeling a bit alienated-"

They were welcomed as guest in the house of the shepherds and several hours passed.

Their family was formed from mother, father, two boys, and grandmother. Several tents were set up on the plain where the sheep were let loose.

Ren and co right now were inside a tent. Night had arrived outside.

The family of shepherd that they encountered in Hyperborea world was surrounding the small goddess Stella and passionately stared at every single action she made.

Stella looked really satisfied at the attention she gathered.

"Hohohoho. What honest humans. They're wishing for a goddess like me to stay here forever. But I can't. I'm in the middle of an important journey with my attendants over there."

"That's unfortunate."

"If goddess-sama will stay here, then this island will also stay peaceful....."

The father and grandmother showed their disappointment.

They easily believed Stella who introduced herself as a [goddess], showed simple respect toward the [divine one], and gave her a warm welcome.

At the middle of the tent, the soil was dug out to serve as a simple hearth.

The family and Stella were surrounding that fire.

Ren and others were taking distance from that circle. Riona muttered with a small tone.

"The language might be Indo-European languages, furthermore I feel that it's a language from really ancient era. I'm a bit unable to ascertain the specific time though."

"Could it be, the language is even more ancient than the language used in Troia?"

"Most likely—no. Perhaps it'll be fine to judge it so."

The special technique to naturally learn unknown language by listening to it for a while.

Not only Ren who was a godslayer, Riona was also doing that with her grounding as a genius onmyouji. Furthermore she also had knowledge regarding ancient language as the reincarnation of Yatagarasu.

This place was a world of [ancient mythology] that was even older than Trojan War—.

Beside the surprised Ren, it was Fumika who spoke this time.

"The food is also really simple."

Fumika brought the flatly baked pan to her mouth.

The ingredient must be a mix of flour from barley and wheat. However, the soup that was filled with vegetable and meat pieces was also mixed with “viscosity” that came from wheat flour. It was quite elaborate. The steak of roasted lamb meat was also soft. There was no smell from it.

While it was simple, the meal was quite fulfilling.

Riona drank goat milk using earthenware bowl. She muttered in a low voice.

"They live in tent, ride horse, and rear sheep. If they're periodically moving in order to look for grass as fodder then they're nomad. Well, at the very least it's certain that they're people specializing in stock-farming."

"Is there no farmer at this area?"

"When I watched from the sky, I also found a place that looked like a small wheat field. In other words the people here are half farming and half shepherding. Their style of life is in the transition period from stock-farming at the open-airs to living in group settlement."

Ignoring the conversation of the two Japaneses, Stella asked the shepherd family.

"Can I ask something? Have you seen travelers in this appearance?"

She quickly explained the looks and appearances of sun god Apollo and Princess Cassandra.

However, the whole family answered that they didn't know. There was no clue of the people they were looking for. Ren sighed 'fuu', it was then.

"Eh?"

Ren felt something out of place and focused his eyes.

There was only the fire burning on the hearth, so the inside of the tent was gloomy. There wasn't any storage like chest of drawers here.

But, there were various miscellaneous goods put on the fur that was spread on the ground.

There was a glittering object among them. It was a diadem decorated with gold craftsmanship. There was also a pearl necklace. Then a bracelet that seemed to be made of silver.

That dull golden colored goblet was most likely made from brass—.

All the precious metal had delicate engraving carved on them. Images that gave the impression of[bird], [lady], or[warrior driving chariot], they were drawn with delicate touch like a brush painting above the gold and silver.

Ren secretly pointed at the jewelries secretly so that only the Toba sisters noticed.

"Those things, aren't they strangely out of place?"

"I agree. They're absurdly out of place OOPArt in this residence of shepherds who spend simple life in an island that is like an unpopulated island. Especially the silver and brass, they couldn't be created without refining ore and mixing them."

Riona also whispered secretly.

"It's really unthinkable that they can make those things with the civilization level here."

Fumika was taken aback by her big sister's opinion.

"Don't tell me, they stole it from somewhere-?"

"Even if they got them from stealing or robbing, the story won't make sense if there is no[attack target that have that kind of treasure] around here. Now then, what is the truth....."

"We can only ascertain it directly."

Ren listened to Riona's words and stood up. He called out to the family.

"I've a bit of question! Where did you get those pretty things?"

He asked straightforwardly with merry voice that contained no malice.

Then the father of the family answered right away smilingly without any guilt.

"Aah, those things, they were washed away to here."

"Washed away?"

"Yes, from the sea. When I walked on the beach they were accidentally washed ashore."

From the sea—. Ren exchanged glances with the Toba sisters.

Furthermore, the father told him even more information.

"You see, in the other island there is also some people who intentionally dived until the bottom of the sea to pick them up."

"There is also wrecked ship at the bottom of the sea!? Or perhaps it's an underwater ruins?"

This time it was Riona who asked vigorously.

"Could it be, there's a dragon hoarding its treasure in its underwater nesting hole?"

But the father tilted his head and said "Who knows?".

It seemed even he didn't know where the treasures came from.

.

In the end, they stayed the night in the tent of the shepherd family.

And then the morning came. Right after he woke up—Ren noticed something strange.

"Eh?"

".....What's the matter, Rokuhara-san?"

Riona who was sleeping together in a huddle beside him also woke up.

She rubbed her eyes sleepily. In the mythological world that didn't have any custom of man and woman sleeping separately, both the shepherd family and also Ren's group were sleeping inside the same tent.

"The family, where did they go?"

"Let's look for them."

Fumika and Stella were still wrapped in blanket sleeping. However, the father, mother, two boys, and the grandmother, the five people of the family were all gone.

He went outside together with Riona. The morning sun was dazzling.

A horse was eating grass leisurely beside the tent. There was also a cart that this horse would pull. However, that wasn't what they were searching for.

In the end—they immediately found the family.

All of them were at a slight distance away. Right beside a precipitous cliff. They could look out over the sea from there. This plain was right beside the sea.

All of them were kneeling and bowed their head toward the ocean.

"It's that, the first sunrise of the year."

Ren recalled the New Year in Japan.

"They're like Japanese people who are praying to the rising sun."

"Rather they're like the Muslim that kneeled and worshipped to the direction of Mecca. I can feel how they're praying really piously from here. Besides, they're facing another direction from the sun."

Riona pointed at the direction of the morning sun.

Certainly the direction of the sun was 90 degree off from the sea where the family was bowing to.

"Then, are they offering gratitude to the sea?"

"Perha—nn? Nnnn.....?"

The two of them walked until the cliff and tried staring at the sea.

But midway Riona frowned. She started staring hard at one spot of the sea surface.

Ren also tilted his head saying "Eeeh?". Right beside them, the five people of the family in this island was prostrating and offering prayer.....

"Rokuhara-san. That tiny island, does it look like it's expanding?"

"I see it. It's like bread dough that is fermented, it's getting bigger into plump shape by itself."

At first, that island was only as big as the parking lot of a convenience store.

It was nothing more than a tiny reef. However, it was bloating up while they were watching and reached the size of a baseball field.

It was rapidly spreading further and became an empty ground that could be filled with several Tokyo Domes.

Before long the bloating land—reached around the same size like Enoshima!

That island was covered with greenery.

Plants were sprouting in terrific speed. They were growing and gave birth to a forest that filled the island before long.

Riona who witnessed all that quietly took out a talisman.

"One shikigami, come to me."

The piece of paper that originated from onmyoudou became a white heron and flew away.

It was Riona's familiar. It became the ear and eye of its female master and gathered information. It was often given that kind of role.

From there Riona seemed to confirm something from the eyes of the white heron—

"As I thought!"

"What's wrong?"

"This island, from among the six islands it's at the northernmost, located at the end of the archipelago. But just now the seventh island is created."

"The island increased.....?"

"Yes. There is no doubt."

Ren hurriedly ran toward the family kneeling right beside them.

"Sorry to disturb! That island, it wasn't there yesterday right!?"

"Yes. It's the blessing of light."

The kneeling father lifted his face and spoke happily.

"The One Who Bring Back Light enlarged the land for us. You guests too, rejoice. There is blessing even in this world that is filled with despair!"

.

4

Four days passed since they came to Hyperborea.

Riona transformed into Yatagarasu several times so that Ren and co could travel with her wings. They would fly above the vast ocean and stopped by each time they found island.

There were only small islands.

However, no matter which island, it would be blessed with nature and had a lot of birds and animals in it.

Sometimes they would also found inhabited island, but it wasn't difficult to find human.

"Until now, everyone we met were stock-farming people."

Riona muttered while gliding above the ocean in her transformation as golden phoenix.

She was talking to her goshujin-sama and little sister who were taken into her body.

"They are living in unit of family and half farming half shepherding. The population of the islands is diverse. There are islands like the first island that is only populated by a single family, but there're also islands that are populated by more than ten families. However even in the latter case, the islanders won't reach the phase of gathering in one spot and making a village....."

(Eh, why is that?)

Rokuhara Ren's thought was transmitted from inside her body.

(Even though it feels like it will be convenient if they make a city with everyone.)

"It's simply because there isn't that kind of living style here. But, if the population of each island increase, then I believe that the settlement will also increase naturally. That is an inevitability of history."

Riona also spoke indifferently through telepathy.

"People with the main occupation of hunting, picking, and stock-farming will start farming, then create village or city as base for community life and commerce. That's the birth of ancient city. And then people living inside the city and outside the city will sometimes mingle and sometimes in opposition....."

(Opposition?)

"Yes. The hunting people and nomad people living within the harsh nature will become unable to secure food when a little trouble happens. If that happens then their eyes will be turned toward the settlement of non-nomadic people who have sufficient reserves of water and food——"

(I see. They'll go there to steal them with brute force.)

"Look, the Greek mythology is also like that but, the people in mythology wouldn't hesitate at all to plunder other country's belonging. It's to the degree that even in Old Testament god expressly ordered humans

to[Don't kill][Don't steal]. Those were normal acts in the era of mythology."

(How dangerous.)

She landed on a new island while having that talk.

Accompanied by Riona who returned to her human form and Fumika who had become completely silent, Ren casually called out to the islander they found.

"Hello. We are traveler."

There was an old couple casting a net to catch fish just nearby.

There was only sea in this world, so naturally fishing was also popular. People making wooden raft or pelt ship to go out to the sea also weren't few—

[Plate ship?]

[No. It's pelt ship. It's a ship with framework from wood and then it has pelt affixed on it.]

That was the explanation from Riona.

[In an era that has no metal tool, it's really difficult to make a wooden ship. Because of that they will make raft by tying logs or bamboos together or making ship from animal skin.]

There were a lot of birds and animals so hunting was also popular.

Picking, hunting, and stock-farming were truly the pillar of living here. Because they had that kind of life, the people of Hyperborea would routinely migrate. Perhaps because of that, they were kind to traveler. It was also easy to beg for a single night of lodging. This time the fishing old couple also were also the same.

"Travelers, it's amazing how you come this far."

"Please rest for a bit. Here, here."

The old couples welcomed them into their tent. There Riona casually looked around the inside.

".....So this place also has them."

The inside was quietly decorated with a[doll].

It was made from clay. It was hardened by burning it, in other words it was a clay figure.

It had very simple make. It had a primitive design of "head and pole that seemed to be the torso with sticks attached like legs and arms, looking like a distorted cross".

It couldn't be compared at all with Japan's Buddha statue or Venus statue of ancient Greek that were refined.

Similar humanoid figure was placed here and there inside people residences. Riona frankly questioned the old couple who possessed the figure.

"That is the god who you worshipped isn't it?"

"That's right. Glory to The One Who Brought Back Light."

The old man smiled cheerfully. Riona questioned deeper.

"The One Who Brought Back Light. Please let me be frank. what is his name?"

"Name? Who knows?"

The old man looked puzzled as though to ask why she was making such meaningless question.

"There're great number of hero—chosen one who brought back light. They will also keep appearing from here on. They head to beyond the

darkness and bring back light and fire to this land."

"That might be so."

"However, well, if I'm forced to mention a name"

The old man spoke in respond to Riona's dogged question.

"Something like ^{Sky}Dyuu, what do you think dear guest?"

.

In the end, they stayed the night in that old couple's tent.

They were also treated to a meal. The main dish was a fish that looked similar to sea bass that they caught in the afternoon grilled with salt. Things like shellfish and vegetable cooked as soup, grilled prawn and octopus were also adorning the dining table.

The old couple were placing their tent right beside the beach. Naturally the food consisted only of seafood.

"Let's go to the sea after eating, Fumika."

"Uuu-. I knoww-"

Fumika answered to the idle remark of her big sister with slight reluctance.

It seemed she wasn't really motivated. The fourth day since their arrival in Hyperborea. The second daughter of Toba House had been in low spirits all the time since yesterday.

Anyhow, they finished their meal, then Ren and the sisters exited the tent.

"Even the house here is calling The One Who Brought Back Light as Dew."

Ren spoke while walking toward the beach.

He lit the torch his hand was holding and illuminated the night path. Riona was muttering with low voice while looking deep in thought.

"Dyuu—the sky. The word makes me think. The word with the same meaning in Sanskrit is Dyau. It's not a coincidence that they sound similar, both languages are Indo-European languages.....they have familial relationship."

Riona stared at the darkness spreading ahead of the unreliable light and spoke further.

"Dyau. Dyuu. The same word in ancient Greek language is Zudeus. This word become pronounced as Zeus following the flow of time."

"Could you mean, Zeus-san who we met at Troia?"

Ren recalled the nostalgic god. Riona affirmed it.

"Yes. His name come from the word of sky being used as it is for his divine name. And then sure enough the ancient Greek language is also from the Indo-European languages."

"It was that thing Riona mentioned right after we came here huh."

"Sanskrit's deva and Latin's deus are also words that were derived from sky. Both of them has the meaning of god....."

"Which myth this world, Hyperborea originated from?"

Ren spoke seriously.

"As expected was it a myth from somewhere between Indo until Europe?"

"I still don't know. Anyway we learned that the faith toward The One Who Brought Back Light is the standard religion here. We should continue our information gathering."

They came until the beach at night.

The dark sea surface was reflecting the full moon's light and the starlight.

"Is an island going to appear tonight?"

"I wonder. There isn't any more like that at all since the first day after all."

An island was created without them noticing while they slept.

It was the event they encountered at their second day in Hyperborea. The same mysterious phenomenon like that hadn't happened again. However.

"When we investigated with the questionnaire survey of [Do you think it's natural for a new island to suddenly get created at the sea] to the families we visited until now, everyone gave the answer [I think it's natural]. That is a phenomenon that occur daily in Hyperborea."

They wanted to watch that phenomenon in real time if possible—.

The mythological world had few entertainment unlike earth. Ren and others stared at the sea every night which also doubled as distraction from the boredom of the night without television or smartphone.

"Uuuuuu—"

Fumika suddenly burst into tears.

"What's the matter Fumika-chan?"

"Do you have stomachache?"

"That's not it-. The life without any internet or late night anime or manga is painful..... Potato chips and rice cracker, meal of white rice....."

Fumika grumbled her yearning for modern civilization.

She realized that smartphone was working even at the sanctuary of Hyperborea. She was distracting herself from the long night of the

sanctuary that was too lonely using web comic that she downloaded, but.

Her smartphone immediately ran out of battery and her lifeline was severed.

On the other hand, Riona was curt.

"That's why I've told you before. Join the one month training camp of mountain seclusion that I produced. If you have the survival experience of living in extreme environment without any electricity, signal, gas and water service, and smartphone, you will be able to endure toughly even at this kind of time."

"Even so doing nothing but staring at sea vacantly in the night is just too sad!"

"I'm having a lot of fun in this kind of wild trip though."

"Well, Rokuhara-san is also someone who is out of standard after all."

"Uuuuu-. These two, they're just overly too tough for Japanese people of 21st centuryyyyy....."

Fumika was weeping tearfully seeing the condition of the older duo who were following their own pace. In addition.

[That's right! Even I'm fed up with this kind of boring world!]

It was a voice that came from below Ren, from a ground that had been stepped firmly.

Stella expressed her displeasure with only her voice without showing her figure.

[Compared to this the cramped earth of Ren and other humans is still better! Quickly finish your mission and bring me back-. Everything about this sanctuary is really no good. There is also no one who come even when I called, this place is really not suitable for this queen of Cyprus!]

"Aaa, you mean how even the Circle of Friendship ended up in vain."

Riona nodded.

The authority of Goddess Aphrodite to summon her friend, lover, servant, or the like and asked them for help. Even in the mythological world where she had no acquaintance, this authority could summon [someone with good compatibility].

However this time no one came.

They tested it the next day after they arrived in Hyperborea. Ren muttered.

"We have traveled quite far since then. Should we give it a try again soon?"

"Stella's mood will worsen even more if it failed. Let's not do that yet. By the way according to my judgment"

Riona declared full of confidence.

"I think the civilization level of this world is around the same with the period of 30th century BC."

"Thi, thi, thirtieth century!? What kind of civilization level that period has!? Does that age have any manga!?"

Fumika asked tenaciously. Her big sister told her bluntly.

"Please don't ask something irrelevant. This era's skill in earthenware production and stone tool manufacturing is quite high level. But their skill in metal tool is still at the early stage. I was able to confirm metal and copper items with simple make at each household. However until now I haven't seen any iron tool necessary for metallurgy——"

Riona muttered as though to check her memory.

"Also, the important point is the cart—in other words the existence of wheel here."

"By wheel, you mean that thing spinning around?"

Riona affirmed "Yes" to Ren's question.

"Actually the invention of wheel was a historical turning point for mankind. The way the civilization work after and before of wheel's invention is completely different.Well, it's also alright to have a night chat about it to tide over the boredom. But it will soon be the limit for a heaven-sent child of civilization and decadence like Fumika."

Fumika was in a daze from the shock she received due to the civilization level. Her face looked like her soul had left her.

Riona shrugged and took out a single talisman.

She threw it. The paper made a whishing sound and transformed not into the usual white heron but into a horned owl that flew toward the night sky.

"Let's leave the lookout of the sea to the night version shikigami and sleep already tonight. Also I have a good news for Fumika."

"Eh, what? Does Onee-chan actually bring manga magazine here!?"

"I don't have anything like that. But, a report come from the shikigamis I sent to scout various places."

The investigation of topography and the state of a country using shikigamis which was useful even at Troia and Midgard.

She also practiced it at Hyperborea. Riona told her little sister whose eyes were shining in expectation with a face that seemed to say [Guess I should give her some carrot sometimes].

"I finally discovered a settlement—what's more it's a port city. It's a place that seem to be a base for sea trade. Well, it's only at the level of this

mythological world but, you'll be able to enjoy the scent of civilization after so long."

"Really!? I want to enter a bath!"

Fumika's eyes brightened after so long and she yelled.

Even though they could clean their body by taking bath in place like spring or the like, it had been several days since they were last able to use things like shampoo, hair conditioner, shower, and the like.

.

5

"Fuwaaaaaah!"

After a long time, Fumika was finally able to erupt in great joy.

At the wharf of the harbor, there were raft from tied up logs, pelt ship using animal skin, and then sailing ship even though they looked primitive being moored there.

Yes, sailing ship. It had twin hulls that looked like canoe lined up and a sail attached.

It was a mini sailing boat that ought to be called as the prototype of yacht. When all those ships were counted together, there would be forty or fifty ships easily. It was quite a sight.

The island this time had a size that was similar to the main island of Okinawa or Guam Island.

"I, I finally can see a city, Onee-chan!"

"Even if you call it that, the number of households is around 500, a population of five or six thousand people is meager."

Riona was keeping her cool.

But, she also narrowed her eyes in delight while staring at the situation of the harbor.

The harbor was facing a calm inlet. Huts made from wood lined up disorderly, bringing out the bustling of the city.

Ren smiled seeing dozens of people walking the streets.

"Recently we were only visiting lonely place, so seeing a crowd makes me feel nostalgic."

Whether man or woman, everyone here was wearing proper clothing.

Cloak that seemed to be woven from wool, cloak made from animal fur. Man would wear a plain piece of cloth, a long trouser, and sandals underneath that. The clothing they wore was mostly in that one pattern. The variation was lacking.

On the other hand, the woman clothing was in different style.

There was tank top, bolero, dress (clothes that were similar with those). The variation was quite abundant.

The people were also wearing also a lot of accessories like necklace, ring, hat, and so on. Both man and woman were the same in that respect.

There was also a street that seemed to be a main street after a fashion.

There was a great number of people who seemed to be stallholder. They lined up foodstuff, general goods, and the like that seemed to be their merchandises on cloth or fur that was spread out on the ground or on wooden stall while talking to the passing by pedestrians.

Riona muttered.

"It's a market, or rather a place of bartering that is the prototype of a market."

"They aren't shops!?"

"They aren't selling and buying with money?"

Riona spoke at length toward her surprised little sister and Ren.

"Just like I said last night too, the civilization level of Hyperborea is at the Copper Period. It seems to be at the middle of New Stone Age and Bronze Age. It's not at the stage where people use gold, silver, and bronze as currency."

An era that possessed both the tool to process ores like gold and copper and stone tool.

Riona who talked about archeology terms pointed at a stall.

"They're deciding the terms of exchange through the dialogue of the selling side and the buying side. Or perhaps they're bringing goods that have universal value as currency replacement. Over there they're bartering furs right now."

"Ah, it's true."

"Textile and cloth. Fur. Foodstuff. Stone or precious metal that can be used to manufacture tool. Those things are valued highly no matter the era. There are also many cases where they used pretty shells as primitive currency. Ah, over there they're bartering a sheep—the livestock itself."

Ren recalled an episode in Japan before the war and right after the war.

"It's something like how they brought chicken to be exchanged with medicine huh."

"Yes. With nomadism and agriculture being close to each other, utility value for livestock as currency will be created. It's like the well-known story in Otoyomegatari, a hundred sheep was presented as betrothal gift in order to take a wife."

"What now, Onee-chan!"

Riona talked about her extensive knowledge, on the other hand Fumika was receiving a shock.

"We don't have anything that can be used for bartering!"

"Smartphone can be used for that isn't it? The LED screen is sparkly from reflecting light after all."

"Do, don't joke-. Within our current equipment that's the most important thing after our life you know!?"

Fumika twisted her body and dodged the gaze of her big sister that was poured on her back.

The rucksack on her bag was filled with all her belonging.

"I haven't done any procedure to inherit the data in my mobile games!"

"You're a child who can still say such thing even in this real RPG situation aren't you."

"Well, if we want to do it in a quick way, then it will be to ask them to share something in exchange of manual labor I think?"

The nimbleness of his footwork was his pride. Ren entered the [market].

"Everyone!"

He yelled loudly at the middle of the traffic with a lot of stalls around.

The attention of the gathered people immediately turned to him. Ren continued further.

"Is there anything you want me to help with!? Ask for anything! I'll do anything!"

"Ro, Rokuhara-san-. Is it alright to declare something like that!?"

Fumika who followed him spoke in worry.

Ren grinned and winked.

"It's fine. I'll somehow manage. Even if a strange request comes, I'll think about it at that time."

"—Anything is really alright?"

Right after he said that, a voice of a man in his prime called to him.

The tailoring of his cloak was good. He was also wearing a green bracelet that seemed to be made from jade.

He was even wearing a necklace that was made from jaspers connected with string like a rosary. His appearance was quite wealthy. His bearing was also dignified.

Perhaps he was an influential person in this city—. Ren held such expectation. The man told him.

"The King of Sea will come soon. We need warrior."

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"Listen, o people of the city!"

A man wearing a white kerchief was calling out from above a small ship.

The ship was on the sea in a distance of seven or eight meter from the harbor's wharf. Two young men were rowing on the boat using oar.

The young man who seemed to be the spokesman of a pirate group spoke loudly.

"The holy king and his army who rule this sea will soon arrive. You shall prepare until then. Prepare to prostrate before our king—"

"No, no way we're going to do that!"

The one who talked back was the person who called out to Ren before this.

The man who seemed to be the leader of the city raised his voice loudly toward the sea from the wharf.

"The people who swear fealty to your king have to offer their livestock, wealth, house, field, everything they have isn't that right!? You ask for everything that we have built!"

Nearly a hundred townspeople gathered at the harbor's wharf and held their breath.

Everyone was considerably scared. The spokesman watched that in satisfaction and declared.

"Then, prepare to challenge us with force and welcome your death!"

That was the last notification. The small ship that was boarded by the spokesman left. And then—

"Haaa....."

Riona sighed in lamentation. She was standing by at the wharf together with Ren.

"What I said yesterday became a prophecy....."

"Aa. Your talk about how the city of non-nomad people will get attacked by [outside]."

A group of large boat was gathering at the inlet that the port city was facing.

The ships consisted only of the aforementioned fur ship, but the all the [pirate ships] had the same size with a yacht. They also had sail. More than a hundred of such ship were assembled.

The eyes of the men glaring at the port city from those ships were filled with murderous intent.

They weren't friendly no matter how one looked at it. Many of the pirates were man, but there were also women mixed in. However the eyes of those women were also terribly grim. They were filled with fighting spirit.

Both men and women were lightly equipped.

They didn't wear any cloak. They wore clothes that looked like T-shirt with half sleeve or long sleeve and trouser with relative length.

They possessed short sword, hammer spear, or short battle axe that seemed to be made from copper. There were also a lot of short spear.

And then the pirates—were all wearing white kerchief. Not a single one was an exception. It must be to identify their fellow comrades.

Riona spoke seriously.

"Becoming pirate using ship is the best way to do looting act in a world of sea. The efficiency will also be great if they gathered fellow like-minded people and formed a faction. After that they moved around attacked from island to island....."

"Fi, fighting something like that—will you be okay Rokuhara-san!?"

Fumika was worried for him. But Ren laughed lightly.

"There're also other warriors, I'll manage somehow. You know about my escaping feat right?"

"Well, I don't think there is any human who will be able to touch the serious Rokuhara-san."

Riona was also relatively easygoing.

Around a hundred warriors of the city gathered on this wharf.

Similar like Ren, they were volunteers who were asked to stop the enemy from landing. But the warriors at the defending side were obviously fearful. They were starting to get restless.

It must be because the combat strength of the pirate's side was just too overwhelming. But, Riona was calm.

"When push comes to shove, I'll burn all the ships of the pirate group with Yatagarasu's flame."

"As expected from Onee-chan-. I'm relieved to have such a reliable and strong ally!"

Fumika too finally calmed down hearing her big sister's boast.

However, the essential strongest combat force—Ren was muttering with a subdued tone.

"Those pirates, they're a bit of bad news."

"What's the matter?"

"Their leadership feels surprisingly firm. It looks like they're full of fighting spirit....."

The fleet of large ship was deployed on the sea and the pirates were closely watching the port city from their ships.

There was more than 200 meter distance from the wharf until their ships. But, the fierce expression and glare of the pirate group could be clearly seen from the scouting of the white heron shikigami.

The pirates whose fighting spirit was blazing hotly were exactly like [beast in heat], and yet—

"They've been waiting obediently all this time like they're waiting for someone's order isn't it?"

"Ah.....certainly."

Riona was taken aback.

"With their state it won't be strange even if they strive to be the first to rush the city and begin their attack disorderly—or rather, it's normal for pirates or a ragtag group to do that. Even the Greece allied army that attacked Troia didn't really have firm leadership."

"Their matching costume also gives me a bad feeling."

Every single one of the pirates had white kerchief wrapped around their head. Also, the sails of all the ships had the pattern of [billowing serration] drawn on them using black paint.

And then, from the sky—the white heron that was sent as reconnaissance swooped down.

It perched on the shoulder of its female master. Riona gulped.

"It's the report from the shikigami. Something outrageous is coming, Rokuhara-san!"

"Eh.....what's that!? It's really big Onee-chan!"

Fumika was astonished and pointed at the sea.

A gigantic ship that was like a tanker was entering the inlet with a leisurely speed.

It was a wooden ship. There was no mast or sail on the deck. It didn't even have oars attached on its hull like a galley ship. Its length vertically surpassed a hundred meter.

If forced to say it had a shape like [a super big coffin].

Even though it didn't have any oar or sail to move it, it was smoothly advancing on the sea.

"Its length is 300 cubit, its width is 50 cubit, its height is 30 cubit....."

"What're you saying Riona? Is that related with that huge ship?"

"It's unclear whether there's relation or not, but that's the size of Noah's ark. Translated then the length is 133.5 meter, the width is 22.2 meter, and the height is 13.3 meter."

"Could it be, that ship also has the same size?"

"Yes. According to the measurement of my shikigami, the result is almost the same."

The appearance of the super large ship caused unrest to spread through the warriors gathered at the wharf.

They were already preparing to run away. They might escape immediately just from the ships of the pirates advancing to land.

And then from the deck of the 《ark》 —

DON! DON! DON! DON, DON, DON, DON!

There was a sound of hitting a drum rhythmically.

It must be the signal. The pirate group consisting of more than a hundred ships started moving toward the harbor simultaneously.

Furthermore, the ships made small groups of five or six ships each so that they didn't cause congestion on the sea. They approached the land with an orderly movement.

"They're as trained as modern army! It's at the level that it won't be strange if they've received the merciless training of Frederick the Great!"

"As expected, they aren't just mere pirate!"

Around Yatagarasu and her master, the warriors who should be protecting the harbor were starting to run away.

They didn't move to intercept, but scattering away like baby spiders. In that case, the fate of the port city now depended on them.

"Fumika-chan, move back."

"Ye, yes!"

The second daughter of Toba House obeyed what she was told. Now there were only the two of them there.

Ren and Riona stood side by side and faced the sea. In that instant.

Byuhn. Dooonn!

The sound of something heavy moving through air and the sound of smashing loudly.

Surprisingly from the ark—a large rock was fired, flew in the air, and crushed the house that looked like hut at the beach of the port city!

Furthermore, it wasn't just a single shot.

Byuhn. Dooonn! Byuhn. Dooonn! Byuhn. Dooonn!

Rocks were falling one after another toward the port city.

The ground was gouged each time. Huts were crushed. The ships moored at the wharf were smashed into pieces.

"They got really amazing projectile weapon there!"

"There is catapult—in other words stone throwing device on the ark's deck! Furthermore its super big type with size and power that are thrice the one used by ancient Roman army!"

Riona's white heron that was sent to the sky was looking down on the gigantic ship.

There was something on the deck that had the total length of 133 meter. The scenery that the shikigami sent to Riona was also forming in Ren's brain through the connection from the Contract of Wings.

"That's catapult!"

Ren was shocked.

Ten catapults were lined up at the starboard side of the deck, aiming at the port city.

Thick squared timber—the catapult's wooden arm with length that might reach four meter was fastened using spring that seemed to be created using animal's tendon. The catapult was fixed in place on a wooden foundation. It was that kind of mechanism.

The squared timber arm was shaped like a large plate at the tip. The rock carried by several people was placed on it.

After that the arm part was pulled down with effort—and it was fired.

Using the spring action, the large rock was thrown to the air!

"This sanctuary is in the phase where metal weapon's propagation will be from here on! And yet the other side possess invention at the class of Leonardo da Vinci!"

Riona yelled. Ren muttered.

"You mean that genius inventor person. Isn't that unfair?"

"Yes. This is truly a cheat."

And then even more surprising scene was occurring on the ark's deck.

There were a great number of pirates wearing white kerchief there. Their total number might be a thousand pirates. Furthermore they were lined up orderly.

In addition it was a well-organized formation that was just like the modern army parade.

The one thousand pirates above the deck were all doing[attention] posture. They were sending gaze of fear and reverence—toward a tent.

On the deck of the gigantic ship, there was a white tent put up on it.

Several rods were erected around the tent with flag of red cloth tied on them. Those flags were flapping from the sea breeze.

"That's an extravagant set up that I will believe it even if I'm told that is a ^{tent}ger used by a khan of equestrian tribe....."

Riona was impressed.

Furthermore, near the tent there was a band playing drum and flute.

There were even men and women holding stringed instrument that looked similar with a koto or being empty handed like a choir.

This one numbered around a hundred in total. It was a large group even when compared with the modern orchestra. For this kind of personnel to exist among pirate group of super ancient era—

"They're even more elegant than the Greece army we faced in Troia."

"That ark, that catapult, the discipline of the soldiers, they're all too advanced that it disturb the outlook of this world slightly. Let's be on our guard."

Ren and Riona nodded to each other.

The enemies were still advancing even while they were being surprised.

The advance guard of the landing force that was made up from small sailing ships would arrive at the harbor in just ten more meters.

"Yosh. I'll take care of that so——"

"I will be in charge of anti-air defense. Roger, goshujin-sama!"

Riona called her master with an attitude that was really far away from being respectful. The her eyes started to shine blue.

On the other hand, Ren started running in full speed.

He ran toward the tip of the wharf that was jutting out toward the sea.

There five pirate ships were rapidly approaching. Ren headed toward the ship that was at the forefront—and jumped toward its prow.

Using the momentum of his full speed sprint, he utilized his whole body like a spring!

"TEYAAAAAAAH!"

Natural reflexes and flexibility. Those were Rokuhara Ren's secret strong point.

With a great leap that even resembled the eight-boat leaps, he splendidly boarded the enemy ship—but just before that. The pirate on the ship aimed at the charging Ren— (TN: Eight boat leaps, reference to Minamoto no Yoshitsune)

"Eat this, you damn idiot!"

He threw a spear.

The copper spear tip should gouge Ren's torso. However, godspeed movement. The nimble feet and agility of Goddess Nemesis granted Rokuhara Ren with mobility like he was flying.

Ren smoothly dodged the spear midair, and in that instant he landed on the enemy ship.

Within a moment that was less than a second, and furthermore it didn't even take a percent of a second.

He rushed with a lightning speed and pushed the back of the four pirates on the ship. He also swept their legs and pushed them into the sea.

Splosh! Splosh! Splosh! Splosh!

Sound of falling into water came in succession—Ren already finished jumping to the next ship when the sound reached the ear. The six crews of this ship were also pushed into the sea.

After that it was repeating that action.

A human who could stop Rokuhara Ren who was running in god speed didn't exist among the landing force.

In the end, the soldiers boarding more than a hundred pirate ships were pushed into the sea. Even so not even a minute had passed since he started running from the wharf.

And then, Ren called out.

"I'll say this, if you guys intend to continue, then next I'll have your life."

The number of pirates falling to the sea was several hundred.

Every single one without exception was staring at Ren with a gaze of awe. They were soaked in sea water while trembling with a face as though they had encountered an evil god.

Even during this time, the launching of rocks using catapult was still continuing.

But, in the air the golden sacred bird Yatagarasu appeared. The large phoenix with wings span of more than ten meters showed long-slitted eyes that were shining blue.

Those blue eyes were staring at the ark coolly.

All the rocks that were launched from the giant ship using catapults were annihilated with sizzling sound.

They evaporated on their way toward the port city. The spirit of fire and sun that controlled the sacred flame, Yatagarasu used her spiritual power—.

"The other side will realize now that we're also not ordinary people won't they?"

"I hope so. Even if we're facing pirates, I don't want to take their lives if possible."

Riona was flying as Yatagarasu above the small sailing ship on the sea where Ren was standing at.

They could exchange conversation with telepathy even from distance. And then, the rhythmical sound of drum was starting to resound from the super dreadnought class ark.

DON DON DON DON. DON DON DON DON. DON DON DON DON.

It was the beginning of a heroic melody.

There was sound of flutes combined with the chorus of men and women too. Even though it was simplistic, an impactful great musical performance was started!

Also, a small ship was approaching.

The pirate wearing white kerchief standing on the prow declared toward Ren.

"Our leader, the one without equal under heaven ^{White Lotus King}《Byakuren Ou》 has invited the two of you! Both of you are specially permitted to embark on ^{Sea Dragon King}《Kairyuuou》 ! Come with me!"

Chapter 3 – Holy King's Descent

1

(We should have shown a considerable combat strength back there didn't we?)

Ren whispered to Riona who returned to the form of high school girl.

(And yet, the boss of the pirates called us to come before him with condescending attitude. Does this mean that the other side also [has confidence in their skill]?)

(Perhaps it's that, or perhaps it's someone so foolish that they can't even recognize the difference in strength between both sides.)

Riona also answered with a whispering voice.

(I hope that it's the latter but, this is the mysterious pirate king who introduced very strange future gadget. We can't be optimistic.)

They were inside the gigantic ship named Kairyyuuou.

The gigantic ship that rivaled even the Noah's ark that could be filled with a pair of every kind of animal surprisingly had a structure where small ship could be moored at the extremely long hull's side. There were even stairs set up to climb from the ship's bottom until the deck.

The two of them secretly talked while climbing those stairs and feeling the sea breeze on their body.

The one guiding them was the pirate A in white kerchief who addressed Ren before this.

The first reason why he accepted the invitation that he even asked Riona to dispel her transformation was simply because he was interested with the pirate's boss called Byakuren Ou. The other reason was because [it was nice to have it easy to be led until the presence of the last boss].

If the discussion and negotiation broke down, then they could just simply move to battle.

Both Ren and Riona weren't restrained. They also didn't get weapon pointed at them. Byakuren Ou who allowed that might have a lot of confidence in his own strength just as they thought.

(Thinking back this is mythological world huh.)

(The true identity of the pirate king is a god from somewhere.....that's a likely development.)

Both he and his partner braced themselves.

They would soon arrive at the top of the stairs. There would be just a bit more until they reached the deck of the giant ship.

DON DON DON DON. DON DON DON DON DON. DON DON DON DON DON—.

The volume of the soul-stirring melody that was being played since some time ago was getting louder each time they took a step on the stairs. The melody was continuing to play without pause until Ren and Riona reached this point.

"Hey, mister."

Ren called at their guide who was right in front of them.

"This music, is it a music to welcome us?"

"Fool. All of this music is dedicated for the holy Byakuren Ou. Don't get conceited."

The guide didn't even look back and replied unkindly.

It seemed that the pirates didn't even give any consideration to the man of super acceleration or the fire bird girl. Ren smiled wryly while Riona's eyes opened wide in surprise.

It seemed someone at their level wasn't a match against the presence of Byakuren Ou!

—Finally they finished climbing up the stairs from the ship's bottom.

They could look over above the astonishingly spacious deck.

The aforementioned band, the thousand of pirates in orderly line, the extremely extravagant tent. They could confirm all those things that they saw from above through a shikigami's eyes with their own naked eyes this time.

"Ah. That, it's the people that Rokuhara-san pushed into the sea."

"You're right."

There were around three hundred pirates who were soaked wet.

They didn't join the lines of their comrades. The "fellows who were done in" by Ren were gathered into one group. They were lined up neatly just as expected, although the faces of them the defeated group were gloomy.

Ren and Riona were led by the guide into that and advanced forward steadily.

They walked until an emptied space at the middle of the tent, band, and pirates. There the pirate guide suddenly knelt in a flash with *bam!* sound.

Ahead of where he was bowing his head toward was that extravagant tent—.

"O owner of wisdom without equal and valor that smash even the stars of heaven! The holy Byakuren Ou! Once more I swear my loyalty to your august self that is overflowing with benevolence and splendor!"

The guide prostrated while—banging his head right on the floor.

Bang! His forehead hit the deck's wooden material.

"He's bleeding there....."

"That's because he made a nice sound from the headbutt....."

The two earthlings reflexively drew back.

The white kerchief on the head of Mr. guide who head-butted the floor had redness spreading on it. The other pirates were of course being silent during all this.

The area was ruled by silence. But, a voice finally resounded.

"Guest's guide, your effort is appreciated!"

That was the voice of the girl right beside the tent.

She was a lovely girl but her voice was loud. And above all it was a beautiful voice, like the ringing of a bell. Perhaps the girl was Byakuren Ou?—the moment Ren was suspecting that, the girl with beautiful voice quickly entered the tent.

Two or three minutes passed.

The girl with beautiful voice came out once more and then spoke with a really clear voice.

"I shall convey the voice of Byakuren Ou! Before the talk with the guest, the treatment of the defeated will be decided! You people who were unsightly defeated, do you understand that you have stained the authority of Byakuren Ou!?"

"But of course!"

A young man who seemed to be the leader of the soaked wet pirates stepped forward.

He faced the girl of beautiful voice in front of the tent. Looking carefully, this girl alone was clad in white long garment that looked like a gown. The bottom of her garment was fluttering like a skirt.

Riona whispered.

"It seems her role is to convey the message from Byakuren Ou. Her role is like a priestess or a committee chairman."

"So the person himself is inside that tent....."

The conversation of the pirates were continuing even while the two were whispering between themselves.

The leader of the landing force who stepped forward was questioned by the girl of beautiful voice.

"Then what will you do!?"

"Like this! This sin shall be atoned with the blood of their leader, me! I pray that this fault won't affect the others as well as their family!"

The leader raised his voice in answer—right after that.

The soaked wet pirate leader drew out a short sword from his waist, placed the copper blade on his own neck, and pulled it to the side decisively—.

Pshew! Blood sprayed. He cut his own neck.

The body of the pirate who committed suicide fell with a thud. Ren was taken aback from the bottom of his heart.

"He, he killed himself....."

"A suicide in order to make up for his sin of being defeated by us.....
My goodness."

Riona was also astonished.

The other pirates were watching this scene as though there was nothing wrong about it.

The girl with beautiful voice retreated inside the tent again and then she came out after a while.

"I shall announce the decision of Byakuren Ou! The blood of redemption has certainly been accepted. Everything is forgiven! Rejoice, all of you!"

[illegible]

The moment the girl with beautiful voice announced that, every one of the thousand pirates and band raised their voice, thrust up their arm, and exploded in great joy.

"OOOOOOOH! Deeply merciful Byakuren Ou, banzai!"

"The one who grant hope to great sinner such as us! Byakuren Ou-sama!"

"O king! King among kings! The victorious one who know now defeat!"

Ren and Riona exchanged gaze in front of the frenzied mass.

To think that they would witness this kind of sight—. They whispered to each other.

"This is fanaticism. I heard that the victim of domestic violence or power harassment will run to fanatic act in order to forcefully convince themselves to accept the awfulness of the perpetrator....."

"This is a mood that we can't keep up with isn't it....."

"This Byakuren Ou is one outrageous tyrant....."

It was only the two of them who were calm on the deck of this giant ship.

However, the wild enthusiasm immediately settled down. The moment the girl with beautiful voice quietly raised his right hand, the frenzied people shut their mouth tightly.

The girl's voice was raised once more within the silence.

"Next I shall inform the two guests! Byakuren Ou has spoken. The strength of both of you are quite something. Therefore, serve me——"

"Serve? You mean becoming a subordinate?"

Ren grinned and took a step forward.

"I don't wanna. If I'm going to join, then it will be to run this pirate group together with Byakuren Ou-san—I'm not going to accept if not as joint partner. Or if you don't want that, then I'll be the new leader and Byakuren Ou-san can be the vice captain!"

"And then, I'll be the prime minister or the archbishop."

Riona also made a similar grin.

"That's what they called the right person in the right place. [Serve me]? In your dream!"

"Besides, there's no way we can become a subordinate to someone who we don't even know the face of!"

The two cheerfully spoke sharply.

They had seen through really easily that the other party wasn't someone who could be talked with. In that case, it would be pointless to probe each other's intention.

Then—the girl with beautiful voice retreated into the tent again.

It seemed she loyally went to listen to Byakuren Ou's reply. And then, she immediately came out.

"In that case dear guests. Display your capability!"

"Eh?"

Ren tilted his head hearing the strange message. The girl with beautiful voice continued further.

"You are the equal of this Byakuren Ou—if that's what you claimed, then display your strength instead of just words. We shall talk after that, that is the words of the king!"

Zun! Right after that, a wooden doll fell from the sky.

It suddenly appeared from empty air. Just like how when Riona summoned something using onmyoudou. The puppet was also big.

Its height was around two and a half meter.

It stepped on the deck with two legs and stood imposingly.

Yes. It was more or less humanoid. However its shape was simple, a torso like thick log with a head like a bucket, and slightly short arms and legs attached to the torso. Attached on its wrists was just a simple globe. It wasn't even a fist.

Riona commented in a low voice.

"The design is like the first Iron Man suits turned even more shabbier."

"I saw something like this in kung fu movie a long time ago. The title was something like [Shaolin Temple Wooden Man Fist]."

Ren also spoke his impression that was formed exactly because he was a modern man with discerning eyes.

However the two immediately got impressed. The wooden doll with half-hearted design suddenly unleashed a practice punch with a sharp movement.

Shuu, shuu! The sound of fist cutting through air was powerful.

In addition it performed a magnificent upper spinning kick that brilliantly swept through the air.

This powerful and flowing shadow boxing looked like kenpo's kata. Even Ren who had moderate amount of hand-to-hand fighting rarely watched something like this.

The girl with beautiful voice spoke coldly.

"This wooden man is provided by Byakuren Ou's secret art! First you shall take care of this!"

"Secret art? What does that mean!?"

"It seems Byakuren Ou-san is a magician like me! She performed magic of creation type and produced this wooden golem!"

Almost at the same time with Riona's yell, the wooden puppet kicked on the ground.

It closed the distance to Ren to zero with a speed like a gale. It punched with a right straight!

.

2

Rokuhara Ren possessed the authority of Goddess Nemesis.

No matter how masterful the wooden puppet in hand-to-hand fighting, naturally he was able to deal with it easily. That was how it should be. However, while avoiding the enemy's right straight,

"Eh——!?"

Ren was shocked. He circled to the wooden puppet's right side with a clockwise footwork and smoothly dodged [the right fist replacement globe] that wasn't even shaped like had.

But the next moment, the stretching arm and fist of the wooden puppet vanished.

"What's that!?"

Ren certainly saw it while gazing in astonishment.

The vanished wooden arm appeared once more in just an instant later. The arm that was completely extended because it was just right after it launched a straight punch was approaching toward Ren that was right beside it!

Perhaps it was a variation of backhand blow.

Ren realized. This was a combo technique.

A straight punch was released. Even if it was dodged the puppet rotated its body with its right arm still stretched, in order to hit the nimble opponent using forearm and back of the hand that was swung right to the side——

"Uwah!?"

Ren immediately squatted and dodged the puppet's right arm that should hit his head.

God, hero, godslayer. An enemy that wasn't any of the mentioned was making an attack that worried him and he dodged with desperation. It was his first time experiencing that since obtaining Nemesis's authority.

Ren who was still in the middle of super acceleration stared sharply at the wooden puppet while still crouching.

From here on he would ascertain——what was going on!

The puppet launched a follow up kick like it was only natural.

It swung down the hell of its left leg like an axe toward the head of Ren who was on the ground.

However, this was strange. Rokuhara Ren was faster than sound when in the middle of his acceleration. Even though it would be only natural to lose sight of him with his godspeed movement that was faster than mach speed—.

Ren leaped backward using only the spring of his knee. He kept crouching.

It was an extremely unnatural movement. However, his inherent explosive instantaneous force and Goddess Nemesis's escaping legs lightly brought his slim body to a meter behind.

When he landed on the ground, he stretched both his legs and deftly stood up.

It was a splendid movement that was like a choreographed dance. But, of course he was adlibbing it.

"Actually I can escape until the edge of the ship but....."

He intentionally stayed at close range in order to [look] properly at the wooden puppet's [wooden man fist]. Sure enough, the opponent's movement was novel and mysterious.

The left leg that should be swung down to the ground as an axe kick—

Was rapidly approaching Ren's face from the side already when he noticed. The top of the foot that was like wooden clog was approaching fast toward his face. It was an upper spinning kick.

"It's this!"

Ren carefully observed.

Originally he should be able to see [the leg that was used to perform axe kick hitting the floor and then launching a high kick with the same leg]. If the opponent was a prodigy of kicking technique then [a godly skill of the moment the axe kick was dodged, the leg that was still in the air pranced up into a high kick] was also possible.

However, he was completely unable to witness that kind of switching motion in the middle.

It was like a poorly done animation. The progression of the action wasn't properly drawn and only the first and the last pictures were shown, so the movement looked terribly sketchy—.

"Something like this is really the first time for me!"

This time he leaped five meter backward and dodged the wooden puppet's high kick.

The technique was certainly extremely novel. But it wasn't at the level that couldn't be handled with Ren's overwhelming speed and escaping legs.

"That's if the opponent is this puppet though....."

Ren muttered and stopped his legs.

Zun-. Zun-. The wooden puppet approached with heavy footsteps. It swung up its right foot and tried to sink its toes into Ren's torso with a sharp front kick—

"I wish for the judgment of justice right here."

He performed the retributive judgment right after he broke into a run with his full speed.

While he passed beside the wooden puppet quickly, his right hand's middle finger and index finger touched the torso that was like a log. The counter activated with that.

All the damage from the punches and kicks that were unleashed until now came down on the puppet itself.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The wooden doll's face, chest, and torso, the three vital spots were dented. Cracks spread to its whole body from there and it was smashed to pieces.

Ren sprinted without care of that. A girl yelled behind him.

"Oo! The wooden man who was bestowed the fist technique from Byakuren Ou is—!?"

It was the surprised voice of that beautifully voiced girl.

When Ren heard that, he was already—inside the tent.

No one was even able to stop his godspeed dash and he succeeded in sneaking until right before the leader Byakuren Ou.

"Rokuhara-san!"

"As expected from Riona, you're perceptive."

A small blue swallow also flew into the tent.

It was the transformed Riona. She who was one in body and soul with Ren read his intention and wariness and chased behind him.

"You'll directly face the mysterious big boss Byakuren Ou. There's no way I can stay out of that."

"Even the gatekeeper class monster was that kind of tricky thing after all. I can't even imagine what kind of absurd fellow the person himself is."

He conversed with the blue swallow that perched on his left shoulder.

And then, Ren was already feeling a chill. Even though he was infiltrating with super speed that was faster than even sound, there was no one inside the tent.

"Even though there should be no time for him to escape and hide"

"After all Rokuhara-san destroyed the wooden doll and entered the tent almost at the same time. Did he predict it beforehand——"

"Or he is someone who can move in the same speed like me....."

The inside of the tent was also extravagant like its outside appearance.

Several beautiful and glossy furs were laid down. Every single one was surely high class items. There was even one with striped pattern of black and yellow that seemed to be a tiger's skin.

There were also a great amount of treasures and gold bars placed inside wooden boxes.

There were also weapons like sword, spear, lance, bow and arrow, etc. Unlike the low-grade stuff that was wielded by small fries, the weapons' sheath and workmanship were decorated with jewels.

However, they couldn't find any human or godly existence here——.

"Don't tell me there was no one here from the beginning?"

‘Nyaaaaa.’

When Ren tilted his head, he heard a cry.

There was a black cat right before him. However, he didn't know since when it was there. Even though he had been looking around restlessly inside the tent all this time and confirmed that there was nobody but him and Riona.

Riona whispered with her blue swallow form.

"Is this cat Byakuren Ou? As expected there is no way that's true....."

"Of course, little girl. However, I was bestowed with the great role of conveying the words of Byakuren Ou."

The black cat spoke like it was only natural. Ren and Riona was taken aback.

""Eh?""

"Why are you shocked? Aren't you two also using several mystical arts?"

"I, I can't say anything back to that....."

Riona who perched on Ren's shoulder as a blue swallow muttered awkwardly.

She leaped down from his shoulder and returned to the form of high school girl in a flash. Ren stood beside his partner and asked frankly.

"Why won't that Byakuren Ou-san meet us?"

"That's only natural. You're disrespectful. Listen well. Even us the disciples of Byakurentou cannot see and have audience with the king directly. For such great person with that kind of status to directly interact with the common masses—even if the heaven and earth are reversed it is just not done."

"Eee—"

"That's a sense of values that is hard to accept for modern earth people isn't it."

The two Japanese expressed their dissatisfaction.

However the black cat didn't care and continued talking its unique argument dispassionately.

"If someone actually directly see the king with their own eyes, that person ought to gouge out their own eyes by themselves as the proof of redemption. Those who heard the king's voice ought to scrape off their own ears. The exception will only be our faction's senior vassals or the priestesses....."

"Now I want to try meeting him."

Ren grinned after hearing the black cat's tyrannical words.

"Let us meet with that great king by all means."

"Yes. Even the testing wooden doll got easily crushed by my goshujin-sama. He should have enough qualification to be allowed to meet that king face to face."

Riona also spoke out for Ren. The black cat pondered "Hmmmm.....".

And then—a new voice came from the sky.

(Certainly.....you two have overcome the trial I assigned.)

It was a beautiful voice of a woman, that even sounded musical to the ear.

Even though the voice was only speaking words, it could cause them to mistake the voice as the elegant song of heaven.

‘Am I perhaps hearing the voice of a celestial maiden right now?’ Ren thought of such thing. Riona too was making a surprised face and exchanged glance with him.

It seemed that even the reincarnation of Yatagarasu was harboring the same impression.

When they noticed, the black cat was limply lying down. It fainted with its white of eyes showing, foam coming out from its mouth. It had completely lost consciousness.

It presented its own life due to its sin of hearing the king's raw voice—that was how it looked like.

The resplendent [voice] was still coming down.

(As a reward, I shall permit the two of you to listen to my voice. However, you two have no achievement that merit having an audience with me. That wooden man simply moved by itself when I whimsically shaved a god tree and formed it into doll.....)

"Is that so. Then, I'll manage it somehow from here with my own strength."

Ren looked up at the ceiling of the tent and declared sharply.

It wasn't just a beautiful voice that came down. There was also a tremendous presence. He was convinced that he would be able to meet the voice's owner without fail if he followed it.

"If I'm able to drag you out or capture you, then it'll be a proof that I've enough strength."

(How foolish that you intend to challenge this me. However, very well. If you have the resolve to lay down your life—then come.)

The girl outside the tent also had beautiful voice.

But she couldn't be compared with the voice that came from the sky right now. The voice reverberated so clearly and comfortably that it was unimaginable that this voice wasn't the singing voice of a celestial maiden.

However, Ren wasn't permitted the luxury of listening to that voice in ecstasy.

Pi.....nn——

He heard the sound of something hard being flicked.

Prickling fear ran through Ren's spine. His instinct felt it. At this rate he would die. The [acceleration measure] that only activated when he was under attack also naturally turned on——

"What's this!?"

Today he tasted another shock for who knew how many times.

.

3

Goddess Nemesis who skillfully ran around even when chief god Zeus was pursuing her.

Rokuhara Ren stole that [escaping legs], but it wasn't just his legs that were fast. While his authority was activated, he could perceive all movement in slow motion.

Exactly because of that, he was able to visually confirm the strangeness of the [barrage] approaching him.

Around two or three hundred white pearls were falling from outside the tent in order to turn Ren into beehive like rapid fire of machine gun.

It should shred Ren into pieces as well as opening a lot of hole in his body along with the tent.

"It's projectile weapon this time! What a person of many tricks!"

Ren rushed out of the tent faster than even sound.

The pirate group's name seemed to be Byakurentou. He rushed out to the deck of the giant ship Kairyuuou where a thousand of the pirates were present and stopped.

The tent he was in until just now was being enveloped in crimson flame. It was Riona's work.

In order to protect herself from the bullet rain of white pearls, she enveloped her girl high school's uniform with flame and burned every bullet flying at her to ash. At the same time she also burned the tent.

In his accelerated state Ren returned to Riona's side as though he appeared from thin air.

Everything inside the tent was neatly annihilated in flame without even leaving any remains to smolder.

"I wonder what was the attack that was like submachine gun just now?"

"The attack used round and small pearls as bullet to turn us into beehive. I don't know how they were fired though."

Riona and Ren both tilted their head in puzzlement.

If it was really firearm than there would be the rapid fire sound *GAGAGAGAGAGAGAN!* sounding for real just now.

But, there wasn't any sound like that at all. But right after the attack, it felt like they heard the beautiful sound of *Pi—n*.....

(Fufufufu)

That beautiful voice was chuckling. Ren twitched in surprise.

This time it came from behind. He wondered where she was hiding.

(I simply flicked the pearls that were nearby with divine feat of finger bullet. Your understanding of martial arts is lacking if you cannot even see through something like that.....)

"Finger bullet—what is that?"

"Perhaps, she means that she flicked the pearls with her finger."

Riona taught Ren who was perplexed by the wording of the opponent.

"It feels like you will need five hundred fingers if you want to do that kind of rapid fire though..... But, it seems there was that kind of weapon technique at Japan and China in the past. Using coin or pebble as improvised projectile weapon by flicking them using thumb or index finger."

"Wait a second. Byakuren Ou-san isn't a grand magician?"

"It seemed she breathed life into wooden puppet like a chef making salad in a whim..... But perhaps she actually not only specialize in magic but also in fighting personally—. If I have to make example in RPG terminology then she will be something like magic warrior or paladin."

The wooden puppet that he defeated before this was certainly a user of superior martial arts.

Ren recalled from hearing Riona's mutter.

"If the one who taught that wooden man fist to that puppet is her, then that might be possible huh....."

"Might? How foolish o young godslayer."

Ren went "!" in shudder.

She easily guessed the nature of Rokuhara Ren who still hadn't even introduced himself.

(I don't know what kind of method you used to kill a god but..... I faced against a god fair and square, used every martial arts and magic that I learned to the limit, and won. Someone who can win against me in martial arts—doesn't exist anywhere in this world.)

"That means, you're also a godslayer!?"

"The enemy isn't a god, but someone like the marquis!"

Ren and Riona were both surprised and exchanged glances.

That was certainly surprising. However it was also a convincing story. After all she was someone who could toy with a godslayer of godspeed and the reincarnation of Yatagarasu to this degree.

"Riona. It looks like the opponent is someone that we must give our all against!"

"Roger. I will protect myself by my own, so Rokuhara-san please rampage as you please in full speed-"

Riona transformed into a blue swallow once more and escaped to the sky.

On the other hand Byakuren Ou chuckled still without showing herself.

(Fufufufu. As your senior figure in martial arts who stand at far off height, sometimes it's also nice to play around with a youngster like you..... Come at me. However, this game is accompanied by death at every step—begin if you don't mind it even then.)

"This kind of invitation won't come that often, I accept!"

Ren replied without hesitation.

He was in the middle of a journey to rescue Cassandra. But he had no clue at all to search for her.

He wanted to become acquainted with someone who seemed to know even a little bit about the secret of the gods and the world of this Sanctuary Hyperborea.

(If my face is seen by you, then it'll be my defeat. Is that alright with you?)

"OK! If I win, I want to talk with you as my reward."

(Very well. Also I'll say this beforehand.)

Byakuren Ou's beautiful voice contained a severe sharpness.

(The peerless skill that will corner you after this is named
Shadowless Feet
《Muei Kyaku》. It's one of the greatest treasures of the world of martial arts—that I continued to refine for many years even without using the authorities I usurped from gods. Receive it carefully!)

At this time Ren of course didn't let his guard down.

But he saw a blue swallow flying over above him and thought "Aa, that's the transformed Riona". In that instant.

"That's not me, Rokuhara-san!"

"Eh—?"

"The path of tactician is also accompanied with deceptive methods. You're still a novice!"

Ren was taken aback hearing Riona warning him from somewhere in the sky. And then the blue swallow transformed into a human and landed diagonally right behind Ren—it was his blind spot.

Byakuren Ou who he thought wouldn't appear by all means came out!

Ren turned around toward her direction even while feeling shocked.

But, a red clothes suddenly blocked his vision.

A person who seemed to be Byakuren Ou was holding something that seemed like flag or ribbon—anyway it was some kind of cloth that she threw to bash Ren!

"Uwah!?"

There was no way he would die even if he was struck by cloth. His logic was telling him that.

However, his instinct yelled that it was bad news. Ren jumped away using Nemesis's super acceleration and dodged the strike from the cloth.

Bakii-! That sound thundered.

The deck of Kairyuuou that was hit by the cloth broke and a large hole was gouged there—.

"How can a piece of cloth be that powerful!?"

"Of course, it's because of mine martial skill that is without equal. That's a foolish question."

The beautiful voice that answered him came from behind him once more.

The direction of behind at his diagonal right—it was a position that was Rokuhara Ren's blind spot. Ren gasped and quickly turned to that direction as quick as he could this time.

The red cloth just now attacked him again. It spread out and blocked his field of vision.

"Fufufufu. Even thin silk to adorn the body will become a weapon of assured victory and certain kill in my hand. Taste with your body the height of Byakuren Ou's martial art!"

"This isn't a joke, I don't even want to taste that!"

Goddess Nemesis's escaping legs, activated—.

Ren leaped aside with a speed that equaled lightning and escaped the red cloth. And then he halted himself rapidly. Ren finally saw the whole figure of Byakuren Ou.

She was female as expected. She was wearing cherry blossom garment that looked similar to a gown.

The armholes of her sleeves and the cuffs that reached until her ankle were fluttering a lot.

In addition she was wearing a scarlet veil on her head. Her face other than her almond eyes was also covered with red cloth so that her bare face

couldn't be seen. And yet.

Even without seeing her face, he didn't feel any hesitation at all to guarantee that she was a beauty—

Her bearing was really upright and beautiful that it wouldn't be strange for a lot of men to yell their agreement. But, Ren was focusing at something else.

The red stole wrapped around Byakuren Ou's body.

It was a long and thin piece of cloth with length around two meter. It was a decoration cloth made from thin silk.

And then Byakuren Ou swung the red stole like a whip once more!

"Again!?"

Ren started accelerating once more. He dodged the blow from the thin silk that was moving in slow motion in a hair's breadth and then tried to look at his attacker. However, Byakuren Ou wasn't there anymore.





He turned around in his godspeed.

When he looked behind him with a feeling of surety, Byakuren Ou was there as expected.

For the time being he leaped back with super speed and took a distance of nearly ten meter from her.

"This is the first time someone taken my back."

The sweat trickling on his back was cold. Ren muttered.

"Since the time I first used Nemesis-san's acceleration measure I've never experienced something like this."

"Not showing even my shadow to the opponent, much less allowing them to step on it. Muei Kyaku is a peerless technique that embodied such concept. Young godslayer, fight while closely observing it."

Byakuren Ou slowly walked near.

Her steps were straight and brazen. The sleeve of her outer garment that looked like gown and the cuff of her lower wear that was like a skirt were fluttering. Her figure that was simply standing and walking was incomparably lovely. Her posture and movement was outstandingly refined.

If the distance was closed like this, then he would be attacked by the cloth again—.

"How are you able to move faster than me....."

"Fufufufu. I'm no match at all against you in speed."

Ren felt flustered. Byakuren Ou chuckled.

"All of you, users of godspeed are generally relying only on your speed and doesn't polish your movement..... Although your speed is the fastest but your movement isn't the shortest. There're many wasted movement in

it. Your eyes movement and the pacing of your steps are also really clumsy. In my case, I place myself in the right position using the proper method in the right time——. Someone who can do that can toy even with a user of godspeed....."

"....."

Byakuren Ou's words were like puzzle.

However, they made Ren felt like—he had just heard some kind of important hint. Well, he had no leeway to deliberate over it right now though.

Byakuren Ou was approaching his way steadily step by step.

(In any case she is taking my blind spot with amazing footwork and feint. But, it'll be difficult to deal with that right away.....)

(Please immediately raise a countermeasure at this kind of time just like in shonen manga.)

His partner's thought was transmitted to him.

Ren also responded with his thought toward her who should have transformed into a swallow.

(I wish that Riona will back me up from the sky though.)

(That's.....no matter what I'm trying, the movement of Byakuren Ou is too fast. When she attacked Rokuhara-san, somehow it looked like she was vanishing.)

(She claimed that she is [slower] than me though, is she just being humble.....)

(If I'm going to do it then I'll have to transform into Yatagarasu. In my normal body I don't think anything I do will work.)

(To make Riona say that, this person is really someone outrageous.)

By the way—

The subordinates of Byakurentou were getting flustered on the deck of the gaint ship Kairyuuou.

"Oo! Our king has descended!"

"Byakuren Ou-sama! Byakuren Ou-sama!"

"No-. We mustn't directly see her figure! We also cannot listen to her voice!"

"Close your eyes! Block your ears too! Also don't you dare speak!"

"Prostrate! Anyway just prostrate!"

Like that the thousand people from Byakurentou kneeled without a single exception—

They ended up kowtowing until their forehead rubbed on the floor while blocking their ears with both their hands.

No one made any voice. There wasn't a single sneeze.

On the deck of Kairyuuou that was ruled by silence, the godslayer Byakuren Ou slowly closed her distance with Rokuhara Ren—. Ren resolved himself.

"It'll be bad if I attack and destroy something but, I won't be able to do anything unless I hit with my all here."

He joined his right hand's index finger and middle finger.

Soon it would be time to unleash the Retributive Justice from Nemesis's authority.

But, he needed to prepare something before that. Ren began to take a step in order to show his prided footwork too.

4

Ton, ton, ton, ton.

Ren stepped back and forth and treaded on the wooden deck rhythmically.

It was a movement unique to boxer who specialized in outboxing. It was the preparatory movement in order to dance on the ring with light footwork.

He jumped slightly to the front and then jumped back in small movements repeatedly so that his feet wouldn't be rooted in place.

Ren was waiting while stepping lightly.

In contrast, Byakuren Ou was slowly walking without any change. Her walk was straight and brazen, the focal point of her body didn't waver at the slightest.

It was truly the advance of the king. Her footsteps were overflowing with majesty.

"To be young means to be hot blooded. Even so you're being a bit too fidgety. O young godslayer, it seems you have talent in martial arts, but it's obvious that you weren't blessed with any chance to encounter a good teacher."

"No no. I met a lot of people who taught me good things. But"

Ren grinned at Byakuren Ou.

Smile. Relax. If one wanted to move quickly and lightly then being tense was prohibited. Kept flexible in both heart and body. Only then one would be able to display their fastest speed.

Led around the enemy by the nose with speed and feint, rule the game with rhythm.

"In the end, I'd want to do everything with my own style. If it look like I'm doing things clumsily, then that will be my own responsibility. Well, but"

Byakuren Ou was steadily approaching with her red stole in her hand.

There was three more meters until the range of that piece of cloth. Two meters. One meter——

"I get the feeling that what's important is only winning or losing, being skillful or clumsy doesn't matter."

"You said it. In that case, proof the righteousness of the path you're walking——with victory!"

Shuu-!

Byakuren Ou finally came striking.

The red stole——it was a soft rectangle cloth that was ultimately something light. Such thing was swung down sharply and quickly, like a leather whip. It was a martial art that defied the accepted norms.

Ren himself also began accelerating. Everything became slow motion.

However, Ren's field of vision was mostly blocked by the red cloth piece. He was unable to see the figure of Byakuren Ou that should be at the other side.

Now, where should he jump to doge the attack?

Right, left? No, leaping to diagonally behind——three layers of feint were showed.

Ren chose a completely different direction.

"Front and below!"

He threw his body into a forward leap like performing head sliding.

He stretched out his two hands and lowered his head until the limit. Both his knees touched the floor—he took the posture of kowtowing and slid on the floor.

Rokuhara Ren performed a godspeed sliding kowtow with beautiful smoothness.

He splendidly slipped through the red stole with the historically fastest kowtow.

"!?"

"How's that, my special technique!"

Byakuren Ou seemed to be taken by surprise at last. This time he was able to splendidly slipped through the left side of Byakuren Ou who was swinging down the thin silk. Well, as expected he was also unable to carry out a counterattack from the kowtow posture.

Although, this time he really had outmaneuvered the expert Byakuren Ou.

Without pause Ren rolled on the floor like a log and took distance from the powerful enemy.

This movement was also carried out in godspeed. Byakuren Ou didn't come in pursuit. Surprisingly it seemed she was able to see [Rokuhara Ren rolling around with lightning speed]. Her sharp gaze under her veil was directed to Ren unwaveringly..... However, no pursuing attack came.

If Ren was targeted while he was lying down, as expected even he wouldn't be able to dodge that. Was she unable to pursue him just like he thought—.

The acceleration state ended. Ren slowly stood up.

"Onee-san, when you took my back, it was always after close-quarter combat wasn't it?"

"So you noticed. Are you someone who is really intelligent, or someone with good instinct..... Either way youngster, I feel an innate talent from you."

Byakuren Ou muttered with that musical voice.

Her expression couldn't be seen with the veil hiding her face. However, she might be smiling right now. Ren somehow thought that from the atmosphere of her whole body.

"But, clever trick like just now won't work anymore. I can see that you don't know any technique to take down an enemy while staying down on the ground."

"Correct.That's why, this time it will be a battle of speed for real."

Ren started his footwork once more.

He moved with small movements to front, back, left, right repeatedly. *Ton ton. Ton ton.* He adjusted his feet and body so that he could jump to all direction of 360 degree.

"With this next one I'll slip through that cloth with the fastest speed I'm keeping in reserve and attack at Onee-san's opening hard. This time you will lose sight of me for sure....."

No matter how fast Ren accelerated, Byakuren Ou was able to see through his movement completely.

It had been like that all this time until now. But this next one for sure—hearing that proclamation from Ren, Byakuren Ou approached with that kingly stride.

"Very good! I shall examine this so called trump card of yours!"

Shuu-! The red piece of cloth was swung down.

And then Ren accelerated—not. He stopped his feet, and braced his legs.

He thrust out his index finger and middle finger that he joined together against the coming down stole.

"I wish for the judgment of justice right here!"

"What!?"

Byakuren Ou's body was sent flying backward.

Using Nemesis's authority, Retributive Justice, he sent all the power of the strikes that had been sent out until now to Byakuren Ou's stole.

He pretended to prepare for a match of speed and instead launched a crosscounter with the resolve of taking each other down simultaneously.

It was a feint in order to grasp the initiative of the battle. And sure enough Byakuren Ou came attacking. She was sent flying grandly from having all the impacts of consecutive attacks she unleashed returned back at her.

Well, Ren was also sent flying in exchange though.

"Kuhah!?"

His right hand that met that stole that was created from thin silk—

The bones from his fingertip that became the contact point until his shoulder were smashed into pieces. He instinctively felt that. He couldn't feel anything from his right shoulder below.

However Ren ignored the pain and chuckled.

Just one or two arms would immediately heal with his body of godslayer that was brimming with life force.

What was important was breaking the guard of Byakuren Ou with this and making an opening.

After that he just needed to leave it to Riona—

"This lowly self wish to reverently state in the presence of Sume-Mikami.....by the means of the burning flame and my malediction, purify and exorcise!"

Riona stayed in the form of blue sawllow and gauged the timing from the sky.

She took advantage of the oportunity and transformed into Yatagarasu, then without any delay she chanted the secret words of fire and sun. Bluish white flame enveloped the whole body of Byakuren Ou and she burst into flame *Gou-!* all at once.

"Oo, Byakuren Ou-sama is!?"

"Burning! She is on fire!"

"Damn you, how dare you do that!"

The pirates of Byakurentou who had been prostrating all this time so that they wouldn't directly see their lord.

As expected they sensed the unusual sign and quite a lot of people finally lifted their face. They witnessed the burning Byakuren Ou. They were agitated and yelled.

Ren was also staring at the blue flame pillar.

Thinking that half-baked Retributive Justic wouldn't work, he devised several layers of feint and connected it to Riona's flame attack.

Byakuren Ou was impressed "Oo" while being burned in the bluish white flame.

"You pretended to attack the west but strike the east. You have a firm understanding of the truth and falsehood of battle. Well, you have a frivolous nature that is hard to evaluate but....."

Inside the flame—the garment of Byakuren Ou was burning hotly.

Even the fluttery sleeves and cuff of her gown, her red thin silk stole, and in addition the veil that she had been wearing all this time to hide her bare face too—

Right now inside the blue flame, pure white naked body was exposed.

It was a youthful woman body. The large breasts with great shape, and the captivating constricted waist. And yet despite all that she was slender like winter orchid. Rather than sensuality and worldly desires, her body was instead overflowing with sublimity that ought to be called as a piece of art.

And then, the bare face of Byakuren Ou—was obviously beautiful.

It was a lovely face like flower. Starry eyes and beautiful white teeth, beauty that would make flowers abashed and the moon hid. But rather than loveliness, her face was shining more with awe-inspiring courage, ambition, and above all else the pride of a king.

Surprisingly, the blue flame didn't burn her skin at all!

(Well.....our objective isn't to defeat her after all. So I held back.)

Telepathy came from Riona who was in the sky as Yatagarasu.

(But, I never thought that she would be able to stay inside the fire so calm and composed like that..... This person, there is a limit in even being absurd!)

"Isn't that right. This is more than I imagined."

Ren also commented in blank amazement.

On the other hand, Byakuren Ou quietly swung her hand. With that the flame of Yatagarasu was erased with a puff. In addition new clothes appeared by itself and covered the lovely body.

The clothes that clung on her body fittingly—was a blue China dress.

"So you saw my bare face, youngster."

Byakure Ou calmly spoke as though she wasn't bothered that her naked body was seen.

"I shall keep my promise. From here on you are a guest of honor of me and my Byakurentou. And then if you wish for it, then I also shall grant you a befitting position."

"Thank you very much! I am Rokuhara Ren. What's your name Onee-san?"

Ren tried to introduce himself friendlily.

Glare. He got glowered at sternly.

"Rokuhara Ren is it. It seems that first you'll need to be taught how to speak properly. Also, shouldn't you have know my name already?"

"But Byakuren Ou sounds obviously like an alias or nickname right?"

It seemed this beautiful woman with overly excessive intensity had quite the harsh personality.

But, exactly because of that it would be bad if he compromised. It would be worse to become a yes man. After all the result of that was this Byakurentou pirates.

Ren tried stepping forward with the resolve of getting punched flying.





"If possible I want to learn Onee-san's real name, is that alright?"

"......Very well. Thinking carefully, you too are a godslayer. Whether our relationship will be a good one or an unfavorable one, it wouldn't be strange for some kind of fate to be formed between us sooner or later."

Byakuren Ou sighed slightly and spoke.

"My surname is Luo. My name is Cuilian. My formal name is Hao. Call me Luo Hao or Byakuren Ou as you please."

"Wait, that means Onee-san is a Chinese person!"

Ren was astounded and yelled.

He finally fatefully encountered [the second colleague] next after his excellency the marquis whose origin seemed to be from Europe. It seemed that she also traveled here from the far away earth.

Chapter 4 – Hero's Journey

1

「This place is Hyperborea.....is that right?」

「Umu. It's my dear birthplace.」

It was a conversation right after they arrived in the new mythological world.

Cassandra was led by the radiant sun god Apollo to this world of sea and island.

The sea surrounding her birthplace Troia was the South Seas with azure color. The sea water was transparent and blue, and when summer arrived the place would be exposed to intense sunlight.

In contrast, the blueness of Hyperborea's ocean was deep.

It seemed the season right now was the early summer, but the sunlight was far gentler compared to Cassandra's home country.

「The country located beyond the north wind——. I've heard the rumors several time.」

The sun god and Cassandra were on the ocean when they were having this conversation.

They were riding on a carriage that was pulled by swans and looked down on the sea of Hyperborea while traveling through the sky. Midway, there were also times when they caught sight of small island and archipelago.

「There were people who said that Hyperborea was a paradise of everlasting spring, but there were also people who called it a poor land located at the extremity of north. Which one is correct?」

「Both of them are a part of the truth. But, they're also not accurate.」

Apollo answered the question and formed that ruffian smile.

And then, he lifted up the silver bow that was leaning against the carriage's rear area. He summoned an arrow of light and stared at the far away ocean.

「Nice timing, I've just find that. Princess, I shall display a performance.」

Apollo fired the arrow right after he said that.

The arrow of light drew a large arc and fell to the sea.

Right after that. the sea surface where the arrow fell was rising up rapidly.

The sea water was rising—wasn't what happened. Astonishingly, a land was suddenly created on the sea where there was nothing before!

「My!?!」

Cassandra was impressed from the bottom of her heart.

At first the land only had the size for a single house to be built on it.

But, it was rapidly expanding. The land that suddenly appeared on the sea was expanding in size in the blink of eye and when she realized it already became a single island.

Furthermore—

Greenery was spreading on the island's surface that was only soil and rock at the beginning.

Unbelievably, plants were growing one after another and flowers were also blooming profusely. The time that passed from Apollo's shooting until the

island's completion was very fast.

It didn't even take the time of a small candle burning to the end.....

「This is my first time witnessing this kind of divine mystery from nearby like this!」

「I guess you would. Something like this won't happen so often other than in Hyperborea.」

「I see!」

Cassandra was excited. Apollo laughed mischievously.

「Fufufufu. Well then, let's descend to the island.」

The swans that were pulling the carriage elegantly flapped their wings and smoothly descended.

They began strolling on the island that had just been created.

It was a beautiful field where flowers were blooming profusely. There was a forest overflowing with greenery. Grassland where pleasant wind was blowing. Birds were flying, animals like deer, buffalo, monkey could also be seen.

Apollo and Cassandra were walking around amidst such scenery.

The sun god who was walking ahead seemed to be looking for something. He often looked at the distance.

「Oo, there it is.」

Apollo said when they arrived until a hill that was facing the sea.

There were two buffalos ahead of his gaze. Both of them had golden fur and terribly kind looking face. Their physique was also exceptionally big.

Just one of the buffaloes couldn't be contained within a small house.

The buffaloes that glittered gold—. Cassandra watched them in fascination and sighed in admiration.

「Those buffaloes are undoubtedly sacred beast with distinguished history. Perhaps they are descended from the gods. What beautiful children!」

「Indeed. They're worthy to be the 『animals of sacrifice』 .」

「Eh?」

Two arrows of light were suddenly fired.

The two golden bulls fell with a thud due to the arrows that Apollo fired. Both of them had arrow sticking on their thick neck.

Cassandra ran toward them in panic. She peered on the buffaloes.

One of them had died. The other one was still breathing, but there was no vitality in its eyes and even now its eyelids were going to close.

There was no way the sun god who was a long distance shooter would miss his mark. He intentionally didn't kill it instantly.

Cassandra lifted her face and glared at the handsome young man who she once served as priestess.

「Apollo-sama, how can you do this!」

「It's alright. These two died as 『sacrifice』 , which is what they were raised to become.」

Apollo sleekly eluded the criticism from the princess.

The place where the golden buffaloes fell was on a hill, and then it was a cliff that was facing the sea.

Apollo also walked until that far and first he lifted with his two hands—the golden buffalo that died. It was a feat of strength that was possible solely due to a god's physical strength.

Splash! It was the sound of the corpse of the sacred buffalo falling to the sea.

And then, a bit of time passed——

「Eeh!?!」

Cassandra was shocked once more.

The corpse of the golden buffalo that was drifting in the sea suddenly bloated and became a land. At first it was only as big as a land for a castle. However, it was rapidly expanding continuously——

Before long, it became a splendid 『island』 .

The island's surface that was only soil and rock immediately had flowers and trees growing.

Thus——

Right beside the island that was created from Apollo's arrow, another island was born from the same arrow and the corpse of the golden bull. It became 『twin islands』 as it were.

「Incidentally, the arrow that I fired at first.....also killed an 『animal of sacrifice』 that is wandering in the sea.」

「Animal of——sacrifice.....?」

「Umu. This one will also become like that.」

The other golden bull, the one that was intentionally left alive.

Apollo lifted up that huge body in front of the dubious Cassandra. He dropped the buffalo into the sea from the cliff as expected.

While Troia's princess was watching, the dying sacred bull futilely drifted in the sea.

「That buffalo will drift in the sea, and when it eventually die—land will be created from that corpse. Princess, this world that is filled with despair is expanding the land like that.」

Apollo declared solemnly.

After that, he recited slightly strange words as tribute to the departing buffalo.

「Animals, you can embark ahead of me. I won't make you wait for long. I will also go over there in less than a hundred days. We will begin the ceremony at the bottom of the dark ground.....」

Embark? Ceremony?

Cassandra tilted her head at the lines of the sun god that was wrapped in mystery.

.

Like this, their journey in Hyperborea began.

When Apollo departed from the twin islands, he whistled.

Then, a large ship came from the sea beyond.

It was a beautiful sailing ship. In addition the bow was decorated with a swan and even the sides of the ship were furnished with carving that was modeled after swan's wings. The whole frame of the boat was painted white.

Even though there was no slave to move the boat, it was advancing by itself.

「Come, let's go. From here on I'll be embarking to walk the 『path to become hero』. We will search around for animal of sacrifice and hunt them for a while.」

Apollo declared that they would set sail.

Cassandra often went to the edge of the ship in the middle of the voyage and stared at the sea.

Sometimes—there were things drifting in the sea.

For example were beautiful and large , buffalo, deer, horse, and so on. All of them were overflowing with majesty like sacred beast, and they were dying.

Like that Apollo would deal the finishing blow each time they happened upon the animals.

Their corpse all changed into island with astonishing speed. There wasn't a single exception.

「The animals of sacrifice are giving birth to land.....」

Cassandra was ruminating the words of the sun god.

However, he would avoid the question even if she asked him for more detail. The princess of Troia was driven by her inherent curiosity and tried to find the answer of the mystery.

「Not all the animals who died in the sea are beautiful.....」

Among the animals that appeared, there were also those with the appearance that was completely the opposite of beautiful.

For example, a monster like a caterpillar with torso that was too short and a thousand legs. For example, something that looked like soft and flabby meat lump.....

But, if she spoke of the ratio, then 『bull』 would be the one that appeared the most.

Cassandra was convinced. It was also like that in the sanctuary of Troia-Greece. Bull was frequently sacrificed to the gods as offering, they also sometimes appeared on the lower world as god's avatar.

So to speak bull was the sacred beast among sacred beast.

In addition, Apollo's hunting wasn't just carried out at sea.

When the swan ship automatically reached a certain island, sun god Apollo would disembark along with Cassandra.

They would soar in the sky using the swan carriage and found the animal of sacrifice before Apollo shot it to death.

He would throw the corpse to the sea and created new island—.

Such scene was also often witnessed by the humans. This Hyperborea wasn't empty by all means, the number of humans living quietly on an island wasn't few.

And then, Apollo who was flying around everywhere on his carriage was standing out.

Naturally, people also gathered as onlookers.

When they saw Apollo's great undertaking, most people of Hyperborea would prostrate.

「The one who expand the land!」

「The one who will one day bring the fire and light!」

The people kneeled and worshipped Apollo with this kind of honorary title. Then—

The radiant god laughed heartily and spoke eloquently.

「Hahahaha. Indeed I am the one who expand the land, the heaven-sent child of fire and light, the chosen king. People of Hyperborea, follow me!」

He repeated that speech everywhere he went.

Apollo's swan ship became filled with a lot of Hyperborea people.

People who couldn't get a spot in it would sail to the sea using small ship and followed Apollo's ship. When one day it became a fleet of nearly a hundred ships—

The leader Apollo suddenly said.

「Then, it's about time.....let's head to our first destination. And then tell everyone. After this I will carry out the last exploration and bring back—the sacred flame and the sacred light!」

「OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOH!」

「O the one who will bring back the light!」

「Glory with the one who will bring back the light!」

The swan ship that stood at the forefront of the fleet changed the route toward the west.

Receiving the sun god's proclamation, the people of Apollo's fleet cheered loudly together.

.

Now then—. Even in Apollo's fleet that had become a large family, Cassandra obtained special treatment as 『the attendant of the one who expand the land』 .

She was treated courteously by everyone and also given respect.

Cassandra also had curiosity. She mingled with them the people of Hyperborea while casually talking about all kind of things to investigate. They worshipped Apollo as a 『passing by sun god』 , even so they didn't really regard that attribute in high importance. Rather,

「The one who expand the land.....the people are worshipping him as a hero who possess that title.」

She wondered what kind of gods and religion existed in Hyperborea.

Cassandra was vexed at night where she was by herself.

「Aa. If only I'm intelligent like Riona-sama, I might be able to investigate quicker!」

She wanted to try probing about that more but,

That night, the swan ship came alongside an island and let down its anchor. The arrangement was to stay the night here and then set sail together at the morning.

The people who were boarding the swan ship were sleeping.

Apollo set out for his night hunt. It seemed there was also an animal of sacrifice here.

And then, Cassandra who stayed up late at night alone—quietly slipped out from the swan ship.

A lot of small ships of Apollo's fleet were moored at the nearby shore. The people came down from the ships along with their family and erected tents where they were sleeping inside.

Cassandra started to look for a handy small ship.

「I'm curious about where Apollo-sama and these people are going but」

She muttered alone while stoking her determination and courage.

「Tonight is the best chance!」

Of course she meant to escape. She would steal a small ship and escaped from being the captive of sun god Apollo, and returned to Rokuhara Ren no matter what. If that was impossible then she would head to Troia palace—.

She was wearing a grey hooded cloak while carrying a sack in her hand that was filled with her luggage.

She was carrying a wooden cane, not to support her legs and waist, but as weapon to protect herself. Her traveling preparations were completely in order.

「Princess Cassandra.」

「!?」

The youthful god who shouldn't be here called her. Cassandra jerked in surprise.

Looking there, there was a grey mouse near her feet. That's right. This small animal was also Apollo's divine messenger like swan and wolf.

Apollo must have left it at her side to watch over her.

The tiny mouse announced solemnly with the beautiful voice of the sun god.

「It will be the climax of our journey from here. Aren't you going to witness it?」]

「Is it going to be pointless.....even if I escape like this?」

「Of course. I won't stop you if you wish to play tag. However, the most you can do will be to get captured immediately once more.」

「Understood.....」

Cassandra reluctantly gave up running away.

The will of the sun god residing inside the mouse informed the girl who let strength left her shoulders.

「I intend to have you do one more work. I hope that you will accompany this Apollo until the end of this journey!」

.

2

The swan ship finally arrived until a large island.

It was the largest island among the islands they had visited until now.
Furthermore there was a city at the shore.

Even from the viewpoint of Cassandra who was born in a major nation like Troia, this city was 『prosperous』 enough. The people living there and the number of house were also really a lot.

When Apollo's fleet that numbered more than a hundred ships landed, the people of the city were bewildered.

They wondered if this fleet was a pirate group or people barging in with the wish of migrating here.

They raised up their guard and stared at the people of the fleet in suspicion but—the radiant Apollo threw the large body of a beautiful sacred bull from above the swan ship.

It was an animal of sacrifice that he had captured beforehand.

The far shooting god immediately fired his silver arrow and it pierced the neck of the sacred bull.

Thus, a new 『island』 was brn right before the seashore city.....

Even here Apollo 『expanded the land』 . The sun god was immediately welcomed as hero and the people of the fleet were also being warmly welcomed.

「After this I will head to 『beyond the darkness』 , and bring back the 『fire and light』 . I will bring anyone who wish to come with me. Who will accompany me Apollo in this grand journey!?!」

The people of the city responded to Apollo's notification with jubilation.

From here they wouldn't go through sea or sky, but through land—. The beautiful sun god told that and he got onto his swan carriage together with Cassandra.

Then, the people of the city immediately gathered nearly two hundred horses.

In addition they also prepared seven or eight horse carriages. Everyone split them and followed the carriage that Apollo was riding.

Also, compared to Troia's chariot, the carriage of Hyperborea was unsophisticated.

The wheels had disk shape. It was created by joining together wooden plank. There were even some carriages that were only using log turned to round slices as wheels.

The interior of wheel in Cassandra's home country was hollow.

It used what was called spoke at earth. Cassandra who was immensely interested to vehicle also mounted bicycle in Japan and learned how to ride it quite much.

(The carriage's speed is also interior compared to Troia.....)

She missed the minitruck at earth while continuing the journey.

In the end, the number of people accompanying the sun god bloated into a large family that consisted of more than 300 people.

Apollo's carriage was also running really close to the ground with the two swans pulling it. Cassandra was being shook on the carriage while asking.

「Apollo-sama, where are we heading to!?!」

「You will understand soon. You don't need to mind about it right now.」

Apollo held the rein while evading the question like usual.

Thus the group of the sun god was rushing through land. A lot of horses and carriages were coming along just like the whole equestrian tribe aiming toward a new land together.

The number of people riding horse without saddle was also quite a lot. Cassandra noticed.

「The people of Hyperborea are the same like us Troia people, they're skilled in handling horse aren't they.....!」

In a happy coincidence the grassland was vast and the journey using horse was pleasant.

In the end, they advanced for around half a day to the west and finally Apollo proclaimed with his beautiful voice.

「That is the entrance to 『darkness』 . The fulfillment of my great feat is near!」

On the rock surface among the mountains there——was a cave that opened wide.

It was a large hole that even four or five carriages could enter it side by side together.

Apollo's swan carriage entered straight inside. After him the people of Hyperborea continued after him on their carriages and horses.

It was really bumpy inside the cave.

However, there was a path that even the carriages could somehow run on. The path felt as though people or animals often came and went through here——

Cassandra thought that and suddenly she felt vague apprehension.

(Coming and going? Can we really.....come and go through here?)

Wouldn't people who go through this path unable to return at all?

Anxiety was welling up inside Cassandra's chest. It would be great if it ended just being an anxiety, but if it was a revelation that her spiritual instinct as a prophet and priestess gave her——.

She felt a shuddering chill again.

Because they were inside a cave naturally it was terribly cold on their skin.

Of course it was dark. Everyone was only relying on the torch that they lit up.

However, Apollo who was standing at the front wasn't bathed in any kind of light.

That was understandable. While he was a sun god and a god of light, he was an existence that was described as 『like the darkness of night』 .

According to one of the eulogies about Apollo——

Goddess Leto had intercourse with the chief god Zeus and got pregnant. Goddess Hera who was Zeus's legal wife raged and said 『I shall not allow you to give birth to your son under the sun』 . Leto hid under Delos Island and gave birth to the radiant Apollo and the goddess of moon Artemis.....

There was also a curious tale. Goddess Leto was transformed into a female wolf.

After she drifted from Hyperborea to Delos Island as a wolf, she gave birth to twins of sun and moon underground.....

In any case Apollo was a god who was born in the depths of earth.

And then Apollo riding his carriage was humming.

「Oo Paeon. Oo, oo, Paeon. All of you cheer when I grasp my silver bow. They say 『O officiate of bow and lyre, swiftly shoot thy radiant arrow to the faraway』 . When it descends to the land of Phyto, all shout together.

『Oo, oo, Paeon, the one who shoot down dragon and snake』 they say.....」

Cassandra noticed. That was the words of power of divine protection.

It was a divine protection bestowed to the people following him. It moved away the threat coming down on them and protected them. It even wiped away their fear.

Thanks to that blessing, the people of Hyperborea didn't falter against the darkness at all.

They were made to be brimming with courage and spirit and followed Apollo's back—.

(But, it's not like we are meeting any danger. Why Apollo-sama recited the spell of divine protection—?)

No, Cassandra noticed.

Her inherent spiritual sense was gradually sharpened.

Thanks to that, she was able to perceive—that this whole cave was overflowing with a strange scent. A terrifyingly sweet fragrance was mixed with repulsively rotten smell. Thanks to the radiant Apollo giving them divine protection, she was late in noticing it.

Above all else, it wasn't cold that made her body to shiver. It was a miasma.

(If I remember right—Yomotsuhirasaka!)

Cassandra also experienced it at the native country of Rokuhara Ren and Toba Riona.

At that time the entrance to the realm of the dead, Yomotsuhirasaka was opened, and this miasma spread to the whole area of Kansai in Japan.

Come to think of it the path that the swan carriage advanced through—was gently sloping down.

「A, Apollo-sama! Right now are we heading to the depth of the earth, toward hades, the realm of the dead!？」

「Oo. As expected from Princess Cassandra.」

The radiant Apollo displayed that ruffian smile.

「It's just as you discerned, we will soon arrive at the realm of the dead. By the descend of I, Apollo to the realm of the dead, all the episodes that will occur from here on will be remembered, and handed down through the ages as poem and son. I brought you here along for that sake after all!」

The cave finally came to an end.

The passed through the straight path that was locked in darkness and finally came out to an open wasteland.

It was terrifyingly desolate. There was only grey land continuing without end, and sometimes there would be rugged rock mountain coming into view. Other than that there were only withered trees. It was truly a bleak scenery.

The sky was gloomy and furthermore it had poisonous violet color.

The swan carriage that Apollo and Cassandra were riding rushed through this wasteland.

It was a land that had uneven ground, so the wheels were rattling as usual.

Behind them were nearly three hundred Hyperborean people. They followed using horse and carriages. This scene looked just like a march of an army.

And then——

There was a fissure on the ground in front of this large group.

A gigantic beast crawled out from the ground. The large body that didn't lose even against a castle was covered with scales. Wings that looked similar with bat grew from its back!

Cassandra screamed in fear.

「That's dragon! Isn't that a dragon!?!」

「Yeah. This is the return of my old enemy Python.」

The sun god Apollo was smiling magnanimously even now.

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The evil dragon of the realm of the dead and the sun god Apollo.

The two began to fight very naturally. As though it had been preordained in a prophecy.

「Light become!」

First Apollo chanted his words of power.

Then from underneath him—a long and big pillar of light appeared. The pillar quickly stretched straight up and stood tall with the strong body of the youthful god still on it.

Apollo stood imposingly on the summit of the shining bright pillar. He readied his silver bow.

The sun god's physique wasn't too different from a human. However right now he who was stepping on the pillar of light was in a height where he could stare straight to the gaze of the gigantic evil dragon's two eyes.

The evil dragon of the underworld stood only using its rear legs and spread wide open its wings and front legs.

There was a large distance between the two.

Even if a horse ran at full speed, it would take a while to cross the distance.

Naturally, the fight should be done using projectile weapon—

「I shall treat you to the long-distance arrow of Apollo!」

He nocked an arrow of light on his silver bow and gallantly shot.

The arrow pierced the chest of the evil dragon with the slightest err. Of course with how big the dragon's body was, the small arrow was too tiny. However.

GouuuuuuuuuuuuuuuN!

The arrow of light that pierced the chest made a large explosion.

The evil dragon tasted heat and impact and intense pain. It couldn't endure and bent backward.

But, it immediately fixed its posture and opened its excessively fierce mouth that had sharp fangs lined up inside——

ooooooOOOOOOOOOOO-!

It howled with a sound like thunder. Blue flame was unleashed at the same time from that mouth. Of course the flame's purpose was to burn Apollo to ash.

In respond, the sun god riding the pillar of light chanted.

「O curtain of night, be my armor.」

Around the bright pillar——black mist was coiling around it.

This mist cut off the flame. Undaunted the evil dragon also breathed out the blue flame once more. However, the power protecting the god of light wasn't torn down.

The darkness in the shape of haze. The veil of darkness covering the radiant god.

Apollo whose protection was rock solid fired his arrow above the dragon's head this time.

「Listen to the echo of the radiant bow. The bow of silver that unleash outstanding reverberation!」

The arrow of light burst above the dragon's head this time.

Sparkling lights fluttered in the air. The arrow burst into countless 『sand of light』 that fell down everywhere on the evil dragon's body.

Right after that, explosion rang out in succession.

Goun-! Goun-! Goun-! Goun-! Goun-!

Every single grain of the sand of light became a source of explosion that wounded the evil dragon. The great beast of underworld couldn't endure and roared a scream of anguish once more.

OOOOOOooooooooooooOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO-!

Apollo immediately fired rapidly as though making a rain of arrows of light. They pierced the scales of the evil dragon. Pierced. Pierced. Pierced. Pierced.

Seeing that, the people of Hyperborea who were led by him cheered.

「The radiant god is magnificent!」

「The man who expand the land and unrivaled by anything!」

「The heaven-sent child of fire and light who save this world—glory to him!」

「Oo Paean! Oo, oo, Paean!」

The people of Hyperborea were gathering right behind the towering pillar of light.

It was so they could watch the battle of Apollo from nearby. And then right now their king and hero was getting nearer to victory.

Before long they began to sing a certain anthem loudly.

「Oo Paeon! Oo, oo, Paeon! The far shooting god, the one who heal sickness, the protector of shepherd, the avatar of wolf! We offer ourselves as devout believer of the king with silver bow!」

In the middle of traveling through the long path of underworld, Apollo would sometimes grant them his teaching.

He told them that this was none other than the song that sang his praise. The people of Hyperborea sang just like they were taught, cheered, and praised the great feat of the hero.

Originally, everyone should have died a long time ago because of the underworld's miasma.

It was Apollo's divine protection that prevented that. They didn't even know about that and became wildly enthusiastic simple-mindedly seeing the confrontation of god and dragon.....

On the other hand, Cassandra alone was shaking in fear.

She was able to see the future. She saw a terrifying conclusion.

「Everyone, no!」

She desperately pleaded as the prophet of Troia.

「Let's return back to the surface right away! Pass through the hole before this! Right now—right now we might still make it in time! Quickly!」

She shouted as loud as her voice allowed while getting tearful.

But, the people of Hyperborea nearby simultaneously glared at Cassandra angrily. Everyone, whether they were young or old, man or woman.

「Don't speak nonsense, woman!」

「You're not even praying for that great one's victory, what're you doing!?

That's blasphemous!」

At the end Cassandra was pushed hard by someone.

Yes. She was the cursed prophet. It was none other than Apollo who cursed her so that no human would believe her prophecy.

It was a curse that couldn't be opposed if they weren't gods or godslayer like Rokuhara Ren.

「Aa, everyone!」

Even so Cassandra tried to continue giving warning, but she felt it.

Apollo's divine power was slightly weakening. She looked up at the summit of the towering pillar of light. The god of long shooting was raining down arrows until now.

However, the force of the rapid-fire was obviously starting to weaken—

「Please stop, Apollo-sama!」

Cassandra yelled with everything she had toward the sun god at the faraway height.

She was a princess of a family of warrior who knew a great number of warrior and hero. Her instinct that was characteristic to the royalty who descended from gods told her. Apollo was intentionally—going to lose.

He intentionally decreased the number of arrow, and intentionally thinned his defense.

Aa. The flame the evil dragon was spewing until now was blocked by the black mist. The divine power of darkness coiling around the pillar of light. But, even that mist was starting to turn hazy.....

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*00000000000000000000000000000000N!*

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It seemed to notice Apollo's weakening. It breathed out blue flame with everything it had.

「KYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!?!」

Their wild enthusiasm immediately cooled down. The divine protection of Apollo had already gone too. The people of Hyperborea who numbered nearly 300 were suddenly pushed to the edge of fear and despair. They started running desperately in their panic to escape.

People who were pushed away or unluckily tumbled down mostly didn't get away safely. They got stepped or kicked away by their fellowman. They died or got seriously injured.

There were also people who succeeded in escaping but—

[illegible]

The air was shaking and cracks occurred everywhere on the ground.

Large fissures were created one after another. Hyperborea people who ran around to escape were falling into those fissures in increasing number. They crashed on the depth of earth and died.

The rage of the raging evil dragon was breaking the land.

Within this pandemonium—Cassandra found the defeated Apollo.

「Wha.....what in the world is your intention!?!」

「What. This is just as plotted. I, Apollo is lacking strength at the end of the heroic duel, and lost against the wicked dragon in the depth of earth——」

The handsome man was lying down on the fiercely shaking ground that was caused by the fissures that occurred one after another.

He listlessly lifted up his upper body and stared at Cassandra with a ruffian smirk. He was doing that even though he was scorched everywhere from the evil dragon's burning flame.

「In the first place, this is because you were cutting corner in a battle!」

「No, no. People like us are unable to display sufficient strength in the underworld of Hyperborea. Because that is the fundamental of this sanctuary.」

「?」

Cassandra looked dubious. Apollo didn't pay it any mind and spoke.

「In other words, this is a divine ritual. And thus Apollo die. But he then resurrect as a mighty one who is greater than before——」

「Re, resurrect?」

Cassandra was shaken by that unexpected word. Apollo smiled.

「Princess, ascertain my death and resurrection clearly, then transmit it down as my priestess. I'm counting on you.」

「But! Those people who idolize you are dead in droves like that! Even though it was Phoebos Apollo, none other than you who led them here!」

「Umu. I brought them with the intention of causing them to die.」

「Eh!？」

Cassandra could do anything except being speechless.

Apollo calmly talked to the dumbfounded Apollo.

「Offering and burial accessories ought to be dedicated to the death of a great person. In this way the soul and suffering of the dead humans—will become the sustenance of the great person. By taking in their life and soul, the resurrection of I, Apollo.....will be quicker and grander.」

Apollo asserted with the grin of a ruffian.

So that was how it was. Cassandra who was formerly a priestess understood that theory very well. But, even then, there was no way she could accept it—.

Even now the ground split and a young girl was swallowed.

But, fortunately there was a rock nearby. The girl clung on that and barely avoided from sliding down into the fissure.

However, the evil dragon continued to howl even now. The ground was shaking hard.

The fissure was also widening even now. It was only a problem of time before the girl fell to the bottom of earth together with the rock she was holding on at.

「That's dangerous! This way!」

Cassandra immediately dashed and tried to save the girl.

She grabbed the hand of the girl hanging on the rock and exerted her strength to pull the girl up. It happened then. The fissure was widening further.

The girl and Cassandra were helplessly falling into the fissure.

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「Oo. This is a blunder.」

Apollo who was burned by the evil dragon's flame and was now in a critical condition.

Even so it didn't mean he was unable to move. He approached the fissure where Princess Cassandra fell into and peered below.

「Did she die? There was also my promise with Rokuhara Ren. I intended to grant a special divine protection to Princess Cassandra to protect her though.」

The long-distance shooter Apollo had sharp sight. He was able to look until faraway.

Cassandra who fell to the bottom was lying down in a pool of red blood and died.

The only silver lining was that there was no conspicuous wound on her body. Was it the reward for her virtue, or was it because of the tough body of Troia royalty?

Well, it was an inconsequential matter at this point of time.

「So you come, Python.」

When Apollo noticed, the underworld evil dragon was right before him.

It swung down its front leg. The hand of dragon species possessed four sharp claws. With sharpness that would make any kind of blade to pale in front of it, Apollo's burly body was torn apart.

His arms and legs were torn into pieces that fluttered in the air. His torso was crushed, and his head flew.

Even though he only had his head left, the sun god Apollo was grinning wide.

This wasn't just a simple death. It was the beginning of a resurrection that was overflowing with radiance. The cycle of death and resurrection started moving quietly.

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Byakuren Ou aka Luo Hao, or else Luo Cuilian.

It seemed she originated from earth, furthermore from the sphere of China. Her profile was 『a godslayer traveling a mythological world』 the same like Ren.

After the episode where she ended up recognizing them, Ren asked.

『Why is someone like you being a boss of a pirate group!?!』

『When I noticed, I was already awash with people worshipping me. Well, it something that often happened through my life until now. If there are people who wish to dedicate their life to this Luo Hao, then letting them do as they like can also be said as the duty of the king.』

『Haa』

Luo Cuilian who concluded something like this as something that “often happened” was an outrageous character.

Right now she along with Ren and co were in the headquarter of Byakurentou.

It was an archipelago floating in this world where there was only sea. It had islands of various size that numbered more than thirty. All of them were under the rule of Byakurentou.

There was the 『king's mansion』 at a beautiful island located at the northernmost.

And then right now Stella was speaking with an ingratiating voice in a corner of that mansion.

「Say, you. Byakuren Ou is it? This me, the princess of Cyprus, Aphrodite shall deign to become your talking partner. Keep me company for a bit.」

「No, I refuse. I ask you to not disturb my meditation.」

The bewitching woman who was unequalled under heaven replied curtly.

The small goddess of love and beauty pouted at the attitude that could be said as polite only at the surface but rude in intent. But, she immediately put on the mask of a composed expression and smiled with a twitching face.

「I, I see. Even though the goddess of love is in the good mood to especially have a chat with you, you will rather choose to do something like miserly meditation.....」

「Sickness enter from the mouth, calamity leave from the mouth.」

Luo Cuilian talked curtly.

They were inside a room with good ventilation and also great view. The scenery outside—trees of a forest that overflowed with greenery, then pond, lawn and other things that were tidied to become like a garden could be viewed from here.

Luo Cuilia faced that scenery while sitting directly on the floor.

Lotus position—. So to speak a sitting posture for meditation. Stella clamored from the side.

「What do you mean by that!?!」

「Playing with words without any meaning or reason isn't my style. Luo Cuilian is none other than the supreme godslayer across these diverse worlds, the most noble sovereign of them all. I have to conduct myself in a way that is fitting for that position.」

「That's why! A goddess like me is saying that I'll keep you company didn't you hear!?!」

「Fuh—」

「Kiiiiiih!」

Stella got angry. Luo Cuilian only wore a faint derisive smile on her lips.

If one looked up, there was a white half-moon above. The moonlight brightly, and yet quietly illuminated the night sky. The one suitable for this scene wasn't the goddess, but the godslayer beauty.

「Hmmm. So even Stella is no good.」

「Well, this is just as expected though. Their affinity is obviously bad after all.」

Ren and Riona watched from the side. They whispered to each other seriously.

On the other hand, Fumika was speaking happily with an expression that was excessively satisfied.

「Sect master-sama is really someone who is hard to please isn't it.」

In Byakurentou, the king who stood at the summit was also called with the title of sect master.

Unrivalled strength and charisma, in addition she also possessed peerless strictness, the great sect master—. Even though they were in the territory of such character, Fumika wasn't showing her usual cowardice.

The second daughter of Toba House was smiling cheerfully even now.

「But it's fine. She allows us to stay here. We can use the bath as we please after so long, we can also ask the people here to prepare delicious meal. We can also eat delicious fruits as many as we want. There is nothing to complain about at all!」

Fumika strongly emphasized with sparkling eyes.

They were staying in this king's mansion as guest for these two days.

In this mansion that had Byakuren Ou – Luo Cuilian as its master, there were dozens of servants dressed in black clothes and black kerchief working hard as labor.

Of course, this outfit was so that their master's seeing and hearing wouldn't be bothered by them.

They were tidying up the inside of the building with swift and silent work as though to embody the saying 『swift like the wind and silent like the forest』.

Thanks to them, Rokuhara Ren's team could also live in very pleasant state.

But, Ren grumbled.

「Although, we've also got to close our distance with Luo Hao-san soon.」

「She won't even reply to idle talk. If we can talk with that person about various things, we should be able to obtain information about Hyperborea world efficiently, and yet.....」

Riona also spoke wearily.

By the way, Ren and others were also sitting directly on the wooden floor like Luo Cuilian.

This mansion only had one floor, and there were many rooms that didn't have chair. It was a building with mostly only wooden items. The arrangement of the rooms was made so that it gave liberal feeling with good ventilation.

The structure gave the impression of an Asian resort somewhere.

There was almost no furniture or decoration here, everything was immaculate. It had simplicity that was the complete opposite of pomp and luxury. Despite all that there were flowers inconspicuously positioned here and there in the mansion to sooth the eyes.

However, Riona whispered.

「Metal items are still in the middle of developing in Hyperborea. To be able to build a wooden building this big without any carpenter tool like axe made from iron or copper is a super hard course. It can be said that this simple house can exist only because there is the majesty of Byakuren Ou.....」

「Hahahaha」

Ren laughed at his fiancée's comment.

As expected the other party was a godslaying devil king. She wasn't someone so straightforward. It would be impossible to get along with her with only communication skill. In that case——

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「Reproducing it.....you say?」

「Yep. But, even though I say that in the end it will be only in my own style. The technique that Luo Hao-oneesan showed me the other day, I'll show you for a bit how I reproduce it.」

Ren smiled broadly at the dubious Luo Cuilian.

Peerless technique, Muei Kyaku—. It was a technique name that would make Ren a bit embarrassed to say out loud, so Ren tried suggesting with this kind of speech.

(Luo Hao-oneesan, her naming sense is a bit like chuunibyou in puberty.)

Ren wouldn't say that out loud by any means though. He went out to the garden.

Until now Luo Cuilian wouldn't respond no matter who talked to her. She also didn't even move from her meditation position—but now she stood up silently and walked under the moonlight.

It became “just the two of them” while Toba sisters and Stella were watching.

In the garden of the king's mansion where the moon was shining clearly, Ren faced Luo Cuilian.

「You've made quite the big talk.」

Luo Cuilian made a really faint, just a slight smile.

「To say something like stealing my technique. I shall ascertain it with my own eyes, whether it's just a bragging or not.」

「I'm not stealing here. After all I can't do the same movement. But, I noticed this morning. If I add arrangement to my own style, it will be the same in result.」

「Hou」

「In the first place that technique, its theory is absurdly simple isn't it?」

「Fu—」

‘So you understand that much’, the beautiful woman’s lips burst into a smile as though to say that.

Ren felt a strange deep feeling. The person called Rokuhara Ren was someone who amused woman with his easygoing way of talking wrapped in cheap flattery, and yet he was getting it on with a peerless beauty using this kind of topic.

Yes. Byakuren Ou aka sect master Luo Hao was obviously looking forward to what he was going to show.

Their hardships in these two days trying to draw out conversation from this taciturn woman were like a lie.

(.....So this person’s button is this. Let’s write it in the memo later.)

Tonight, Luo Cuilian was wearing a blue clothes of ancient China.

Riona was the one who taught him that her clothing was also an ancient attire of China.

The length of the long sleeved tunic was long, the cuff of the clothes reached until her knee. The cloth was fastened with a sash, and under it she was wearing thin white trouser and leather boots. The attire seemed to be man’s wear. But, it seemed that sometimes even woman with high status would 『dress as man』 wearing the ancient Chinese clothes and gallantly sat astride horse in the past.

She faced such woman——

Ren heavily sat down on the ground.

「Hou.....you aren’t going to use your legs?」

「Yep. It’s fine like this. It should be good enough with this.」

It was a stance that was unbecoming for an outboxer who used footwork as their lifeline.

But, Ren sat cross-legged and casually invited his opponent.

「Now, come at me however you like.」

「Fu, fufufufu. What arrogance. Yielding the initiative to the enemy is something allowed only to a superior with excellent discernment and achievement in the world of martial arts.. Furthermore, you're saying 『hit me first』 to this Luo Hao!」

Even while she haughtily vilified Ren——

The beauty Luo Cuilian was shaking in her shoulders and showed a violent smile. Rather than being angry toward the impudent provocation, her feeling of happiness at the entrance of someone who was challenging her was greater.

In the end this woman was someone who couldn't liberate herself except within martial arts or strife.

(What a difficult person..... She is interesting though.)

Luo Cuilian stepped forward irrelevant of what Ren was thinking.

Her foot slid smoothly like water flowing from high place to lower place. She came until in front of Ren smoothly as though she was sliding without a sound, and then she raised her right hand high.

「One of the twelve palm strikes that bring me to be extremely revered in martial arts! Palm of Tearing – Flying Peng Falling, know that it won't allow mediocre fighter to resist any, Rokuhara Ren!」

The sword hand was swung down like a an axe to split the head.

It was a barehanded attack. But Ren already felt instinctually that it had a might that surpassed the sword of the hero Ajax the Lesser which he received in Troia.

God speed activation. The motion of the sword hand falling became slow——in that instant.

「What if I do this!」

Ren stood up while shifting his body to the side.

He directed his body diagonally toward Luo Cuilian. He dodged the sword hand with that slight motion. The distance was truly just a hair's breadth.

This kind of dodging maneuver originally wouldn't make it in time.

However that common sense didn't apply to a man who was able to move faster than a sound. That was why he sat down. Because if he didn't provoke her by at least that much, he wouldn't be able to make sect master Luo Hao 『get into it』 at all.

He allowed her to attack first because his acceleration wouldn't activate if he wasn't attacked first—

Shu-!

Using the super acceleration, he sent out a left jab.

His aim was the beautiful face that would make flowers abashed and the moon hid. However he didn't clench to make a fist and thrust out his opened palm to in front of Luo Cuilian's eyes to obstruct her sight. It wouldn't hit. It would be enough if he was able to obstruct her vision just for an instant.

「Nemesis-san, give me wings!」

Ren finally lifted the ban on his footwork along with those words of power.

He circled to behind Luo Cuilian in less than even an instant. The one in defensive side surely hallucinated that Ren had 『vanished』. Everything was done using godspeed.

The straight figure of sect master Luo Hao's behind was matchlessly beautiful. However.

The intensity intimidating aura oozing out of her back—. Even though he had taken her back, he didn't feel like he would be able to take her by surprise.

Ren didn't do anything mischievous and shrugged. His accelerated state also ended there.

「How is that? Sending a jab to obstruct the view while moving to vanish from the opponent's field of vision. In boxing that's like the fundamental though—」

「Fufu. If you get through everything in godspeed, then certainly it will be a peerless technique. Good work.」

Luo Cuilian turned around.

She smiled as though to praise a student who had done good work.

「You have done well seeing through the main point of Muei Kyaku without getting led astray by the striking outward appearance. Yes. The principle of this technique is something extremely simple. The essential points are tactic with clear understanding of truth and falsehood, and speed. If you can perform the way of walking that follow the shortest path—」

「That one.」

「What is it?」

「What I don't get, is this shortest movement thing Luo Hao-oneesan mentioned. If it's not about producing great speed like me, that what could it be?」

「You speak something strange.」

Luo Cuilian made a meaningful smile and yelled 「Chih」.

Then she—abruptly disappeared. The next moment, *Pa-!* she appeared around four or five meter slightly to the left.

Ren blinked in astonishment.

「.....So you can do, teleportation.」

「It's just magic. I'm also well versed in Jinsokutsuu. If it's just a short distance then I'll be able to cross it without any difficulty.」 (TN: Jinsokutsuu, one of the six supernormal Buddhist power. A person can go to where they want as they wish, change their form, or change the environment. My previous translation of it was mistaken so just disregard it.)

「You're an outrageous person like an immortal mountain hermit.....」

Riona had come beside him when he noticed. She spoke grumbly.

「To be able to cover the field of expertise of Rokuharas-san and me plus alpha by yourself, that's already the strongest character. There is a limit even in being cheat. I heard that the way to make that catapult and some other things was also taught by sect master-sama who is accomplished in both literary and military arts.」

「Yeah, really.」

Ren muttered with seriousness that was rare for him.

「I have a lot of absurd acquaintance but, Luo Hao-oneesan is number one even among them.」

「I'll tell you this first」

Glare. Luo Cuilian glared at them with a stern and yet also dignified gaze.

「I'm not your big sister. Stop calling me like that.」

「Eee」

Ren pouted, even so he wanted to break into a dance inside his heart.

She finally responded even to other topic outside fighting. He had known that surely she wouldn't be happy to be called in a familiar way like this.

Even so he intentionally repeated that way of calling while waiting for a 『tsukkomi』 to come back.

「Then, what should I call you then? Something like teacher?」

Ren cracked jokes at this chance in order to leap closer toward the other party.

Luo Cuilian glared fixedly again with her sour face still looking scary.

「I've never lectured you with any teaching though?」

「That's not true. Thanks to fighting Onee-san before this, I worked out two new techniques. I think I won't be wrong even if I call you teacher.」

One was the pseudo Muei Kyaku that he displayed just now. The other one was——

「.....Hou」

Luo Cuilian's expression changed. She was staring at Ren with an appraising look.

「Can you show me the second one?」

「It'll be a card up my sleeve, so I want to refrain from doing that. Even teacher, you still——haven't shown the power you stole from god right?」

「Fuh」

Both of them were still hiding their cards that could become trump card in real battle.

That was right. The 『wooden man fist』 that she crammed into that wooden man was also still a mystery. The secret of technique that flustered even Rokuhara Ren who specialized in running away. Rather perhaps that

one was embodying the greatest depth of sect master Luo Hao's profound martial art, even more than just something like Muei Kyaku—?

The godslayer who introduced herself as Byakuren Ou smiled heroically.

「You talk in that way to someone you call teacher. As I thought, you too are our kind..... Actually I think it's really regrettable. If you aren't a godslayer, I think it will be nice to try training you as my direct disciple.」

「Sect master-sama would do that for Rokuhara-san!?!」

Riona was surprised. Luo Cuilian nodded.

「Yes. Just as I said too before, I feel a natural talent from this youngster.」

「That's unfortunate. But, why is it no good if I'm your kind? I don't mind it though.」

「Because no matter what I teach you, you aren't going to follow my teaching faithfully anyway.」

The woman who was an expert both in martial arts and magic told the puzzled Ren.

「Obeying the master's teaching plenty and then parting away from the teaching after progressing plenty is called maturing. However, the godslayer bunch is always concealing fang of rebellious spirit. Even if I bequeathed my teaching to someone like that, the most they will do is interpreting it to their own convenience from the very beginning—. You were also like that in the past correct?」

「Hahahaha」

Now that she mentioned it, that was also what Ren himself said the other day.

Ren smiled wryly. Luo Cuilian apathetically talked to give guidance for her junior.

「Walk your own path just like you've done until now.Well, if I'm to speak my true feeling, I also wish to find a promising youth soon to train. But you are someone unsuited to become Luo Hao's disciple. Let's give it up.」

「How unexpected. I thought that sect master-sama is someone who will say that disciple is unneeded.」

Riona commented. Actually Ren also agreed.

This kind of talented great figure who was hard to communicate with was always aloof in their solitary whether they wished for it or not. That shouldn't be the staple.

However, Luo Cuilian talked with a detached expression.

「Of course, I have no intention to accept any if they aren't a truly outstanding talent. But, I believe that handing down the numerous arts this Luo Hao has cultivated is also the duty of king. The heaven and earth surely also wish for that.」

(Why does she mentioned 『heaven and earth』 there?)

(Is it alright to call her as someone highly conscious I wonder.)

Ren exchanged gaze with Riona and shared tsukkomi without any voice.

Suddenly an idea struck him. Perhaps, if it was like that.....

「I have one proposal for Luo Hao-sensei.」

Ren raised his hand and spoke out his idea.

「If you want a disciple, how about you try teaching Riona for a while? She is an amazing prodigy after all. But she is also my fiancée and partner so——can you teach us various things about this world Hyperborea so we can travel even without Riona while she is learning under you?」

「Ro, Rokuhara-san, what are you saying so suddenly?」

Riona was taken aback. On the other hand, Luo Cuilian started to ponder.

「Fumu. Now that you mentioned it, certainly. I already saw through that this girl has a blood relationship with a god. She is an owner of disposition that is rare in this world.....」

The beautiful godslayer stared fixedly at Riona.

Riona went 「Heh?」 in bewilderment even now.

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Thus, the talk was settled. While Riona whose acceptance as disciple had been decided was going 「Eh? Eh?」 in a daze, the preparation for the journey advanced rapidly.

And then, without reservation Ren begged his 『senior godslayer』 .

「It will be a great help if you can give us map or sea chart. We are searching for someone.」

「I'll prepare them.」

「Also a ship. If possible one that can be operated easily, and if it's a fast ship then it will be a great help.」

「I'll prepare them.」

「If you can, there are also various other things——」

「I'll prepare them.」

Byakuren Ou – Luo Cuilian readily consented for everything.

Although she had a side that was extremely hard to please, in the aspect of lavishness she was a person without nothing to criticize. She truly had 『the

dignity of adult』 going for her.

Above all else she——gave Ren what he wanted the most.

「About this person you are seeking.」

Luo Cuilian spoke.

「It's the sun god Apollo and the prophet Cassandra?」

「Yep. But the world is vast, so we don't know where they might be. We want to try asking the people of Byakurentou, because we thought there might be information that can become a clue.」

They were in the garden of the king's mansion the next morning after it was decided for Riona to become disciple.

Ren greeted Luo Cuilian who was standing upright while bathing in the morning sunlight. Then he finally broached the hardest question.

The godslayer who owned both wisdom and courage answered easily.

「I know about the whereabouts of people who seem to be them.」

「Eh, amazing!」

Ren was impressed, then he tilted his head. He wondered how did she know.

「I have been curious about the peculiarity of this Hyperborea for some time. In this world there is something that is calling godslayer like you and me and then even gods. That's why, I placed a watcher in a certain place.」

Luo Cuilian spoke at length.

「I gave the order to send me a notification if there are gods who passed through the gate of Hyperborea, Around half a month or a month ago, there was a report from that person. A god with bow came accompanied by the prophet Cassandra.」

「That's Apollo-san! No doubt about it!」

「I ordered another subordinate to follow behind the god with bow in order to ascertain what that god is intending to do. He moved from place to place through the sea of Hyperborea for a while before several days ago, he finally began his 《descent of the realm of the dead》 .」

「Descent—of the realm of the dead?」

「In this Hyperborea, 《the one who expand the land》 —god or hero who is praised like that will sometimes appear. Eventually they will depart to the depths of the earth. Over there is different from the surface world, it's a country of the underworld where the dead is living..... In other words it's the realm of the dead.」

It was the same with Yomotsuhirasaka!

Ren gasped. Ren himself didn't go to that sanctuary in the end. But that place should also be the world of the dead stretching through the depths of the earth—.

「Most heroes who headed to the underworld will meet a miserable death.」

「They died!?!」

「However, that is nothing more than a temporary setback. The dead hero will revive before long and awaken to a new divinity. And then they will return back to the surface—. The 『new strength』 that they obtained will illuminate this Hyperborea radiantly and a certain title is born.」

New strength. And then title.....could it be.

Luo Cuilian spoke the same words that Ren was thinking about.

「God who although dead will revive. God who return from the realm of the dead. They are called like this by the masses. 《The one who bring back light》 . The new strength that they obtained is the divinity of 『fire and light』 .」

「In other words the one who expand the land will go through class change into the one who bring back the light——？」

Ren tilted his head.

「What is the theory behind that？」

「If you want to know, chase after Apollo with your own legs. Rokuhara Ren, it won't be an exaggeration even to call that mystery as the crux of Sanctuary Hyperborea. You should deduce the answer——with your own legs and head without relying on anyone else.」

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「Hero's Journey, isn't it.....」

Riona who came to see them off muttered.

She was at the harbor of the island that belonged to Byakuren Ou – Luo Cuilian. Just a little while ago she heard that important information that Ren gave her and nodded with a know-it-all look.

Fumika who was going to be in departing group asked.

「What's that Onee-chan? Those words sound like something that our father will say.」

The father of Toba sisters took a teaching job in a university, but it seemed at the side he was also a writer who passionately wrote extensive report about history with dubious authenticity.

Folkloristics, archaeology, comparative culture, etc, he also dabbled in those.

Riona who sometimes helped out with their father side job lectured smoothly.

「Hero's Journey. It's a terminology of mythology study. To say it in the style of Orikuchi Shinobu, it's the tale of lone wandering of the noble birth.

The main character receive a mandate of heaven and go to a journey, meet with doctor and rival by chance, arrive at an unknown world, overcome the trials and at the end become a hero—Hero's Journey refer to that kind of story structure.」

Riona talked further in a way that was overflowing with intelligence.

「Heracles, Yamato Takeru, their adventure tale is also structured the same. This kind of tale is “common story” in the mythologies at every part of the world.」

「I see.」

Ren understood. Certainly it was a type of story that often appeared.

「The beginning of Star Wars was also like that isn't it. Certainly.」

「Momotaro and Journey to the West can also be said to be like that. Good grief. This Hyperborea is really a world that is full of mystery. There is only sea here, then islands are created out of nowhere. In addition it seems that underground, mankind's oldest hero tale is getting repeated frequently—」

Riona grumbled.

「Even though the analysis of the mystery still hasn't yet to come, this fiancée of mine! He offered me up as hostage to go into a journey without me!」

「Sorry sorry. But, thanks to Riona our destination is settled.」

Ren said with eloquence that surprised even himself.

His mental state could be like that exactly because he was shelving away his own selfishness for a while. He also expressed his gratitude from the bottom of his heart.

「Thank you. We'll absolutely save Cassandra.」

「That's the only obvious thing to do! You are leaving me behind in this kind of place, so doing that much is only the minimum requirement!」

「I, I want to remain behind here.」

Fumika timidly said. However, her big sister glared at her.

「No way. With me staying behind, the role to support Rokuhara-san now falls on Fumika's shoulder. Work hard properly.」

「Uuuuuu-. It feels like my stomach is getting hur.....」

「It's me who is getting stomachache. That sect master-sama, since yesterday she was staring hard at me like someone in the show of 『The proof of the pudding is in the eating, trying out the newly obtained rare ingredient☆』 ——! She is absolutely thinking 『I can do whatever I want, whether to boil or to grill her』 !」

「Aaa, now that you mentioned it」

Ren spontaneously agreed.

Also, the present from Byakuren Ou – Luo Cuilian was anchored in this harbor.

It was a small sailing ship that was also used sometimes by her. It wasn't a sailing ship in the shape of twin canoe that was often seen in Hyperborea, but something similar with the yacht of modern earth.

There were also a lot of water and food piled up inside the ship. The preparation for the journey was perfect.

The path until the entrance to the bottom of earth that Apollo descended had also been taught to them along with a rough map.

But unfortunately, the subordinate who secretly followed after the sun god.

It seemed that person got hit by the miasma of the underworld and died. Thanks to that they didn't know anything about the current state of Apollo

and Cassandra—.

「Even so it's incomprehensible.」

The small goddess Stella appeared in a flash on Ren's left shoulder.

「The hero who revive in the underworld will become the one who bring back the light right? But, why is Apollo doing that kind of journey at this point of time?」

Stella frankly spoke with a dubious look.

「He is a sun god. He already has the divinity of fire and light since a long time ago!」

「.....This is just a guesswork but, perhaps, he want to heighten his attribute as sun god even more.」

Riona muttered with a subdued tone.

「In the first place it's said that Apollo at the beginning wasn't a god of light.」

「Hee! Then what kind of god he was?」

His partner who was well versed in mythology watched the surprised Ren and spoke solemnly.

「There are various opinions. But since coming to Hyperborea, I got the feeling that perhaps one of those theories might be right. Apollo who is shrouded in many mysteries was a protector god of shepherd at the beginning—. Shepherd, in other words the people and nomad whose occupation is stock-farming.....」

「Now that you mention it, the people in this world are all shepherd.」

「And, it was said that the birthplace of Apollo was Hyperborea. Perhaps, it might be a world that we know with another name—that is a bit suspicion

from me. Though there is zero conclusive proof, it's really nothing more than an idea.」

After making that preface, Riona spoke without hesitation.

「Atlantis—. Perhaps the mythological world Hyperborea is Atlantis Continent.....that's the slightly wild idea that popped in my head. It's too out there like the absurd record that our father will write passionately though.」

Chapter 5 – Circle of Death and Rebirth

1

「Ooooooh! This feels really good-!」

「Yep. This might be the most fun since we came to this world-!」

They were above the 『yacht』 cutting through the waves jauntily.

Ren and Fumika were both smiling. They were feeling the sea breeze dashing over their body while advancing through the sea of Hyperborea in quite high speed. It was an invigorating feeling that might become a habit.

The yacht was fast enough even for the sense of modern people who knew about the speed of modern boat.

The present from Byakuren Ou – Luo Cuilian—

Worthy of special mention was how it was completely a wooden ship.

It wasn't an ancient ship that was made by sticking animal skin on wood framework. This ship might be created from scratch under the instruction of Luo Cuilian who was outstanding even in the aspect of knowledge.

Or, perhaps it was summoned *poof* from somewhere using magic.

Yes, magic. Amazingly this yacht was also a magic ship.

「Fufufufu! It's the best that it will automatically move until the destination! Rokuhara-san, it's really great that we received something good!」

Fumika was also being all smiles.

They were also given the map of Hyperborea and compass as a set with this ship.

The compass wasn't written with N and S, but with the four directions of 東East, 西West, 南South, and 北North. It was an antique that seemed to be really ancient.

By putting the compass on their destination on the map, the magic ship would automatically advance.

Furthermore if they put on the sail, favorable wind would blow from somewhere. Thanks to that the ship guaranteed invigorating speed constantly. As expected from the belonging of Byakuren Ou.

「But, our destination is inland.」

Ren stared at the area map and muttered.

Islands of various size were dotting here and there within a vast sea.

They were aiming at one island that was noticeably large. It seemed that an entrance to underworld was opened there. The sun god Apollo brought Cassandra into that entrance—.

「Well, let's think about it when we reach the land.」

Other than water and food, things like gold dust were also loaded inside the ship.

These too were farewell gift from Byakuren Ou. They should be able to do various things with them.

「Looks like we'll be really busy later. Please take care of me okay, Fumi-chan.」

「Fu, fueh!?!」

When Ren grinned at her, for some reason Fumika was getting flustered. Ren asked him.

「What's wrong? Did I say something strange?」

「N, no. It's my first time getting called with a nickname by a man, so it surprised me.」

Fumika was embarrassed. Ren spoke calmly.

「I'm your big sister's fiancée, so it should be fine. I'll stop if you don't like it though.」

「I, I don't really hate it.」

「Great. Ah, you can also call me Onii-chan or the like you know?」

「I, is that so. O-o-o-o-onii-sa—as I thought it's no good. It's embarrassing.....」

「Hahahaha. Well, you can call me anything you like if you change your mind.」

Fumika looked down in embarrassment. She was really adorable.

Ren thought of her charmingly. But a grudging thought was transmitted to his heart from afar.

(How nice, it looks like you all are having fun over there.....)

(Riona huh. How about you there?)

(It's the worst! I never thought that I'll become like Krillin joining turtle hermit school at this age! That master is demon! She is a power harassment)

machine without any human emotion!)





(You have it rough there.)

(Both I and Rokuhara-san took that person too lightly.....)

Riona's dark thought was transmitted to him.

It was a communication using Goddess Nike's authority, the Contract of Wings. However, for a monster that was able to corner the reincarnation of Yatagarasu with the attitude of her majesty the queen to this degree to exist—.

For now, Ren changed the topic.

(Right right. This morning, about what you said when we parted.)

(About Atlantis?)

(Yep. What do you mean by that?)

(You know, when we charged into the homes of Hyperborea people asking 『let us stay here tonight!』 . We saw it several times didn't we? Treasures that are out of place compared to the civilization level of this world. Like silver items with sparkling jewels embedded all over it, , or brass chalice.)

(Now that you mentioned it, there were things like that.)

(The owners said that they were 『washed away from the sea』 or 『picked up from the bottom of the sea』 . In other words at Hyperborea in the past—)

(There was a civilization that sunk into the sea?)

(Yes. If that's the case, then this is where the continent Atlantis that sunk into the sea comes in. That legend was left behind by a philosopher of ancient Greece, Plato. He wrote in his book Timaeus. 『When the gods cleansed the land with flood, all the cattlemen and shepherds on the mountain were saved, but the people in the city were all washed away』 it said.....)

Riona continued her inquiry further.

(And then the fantasy metal orichalcum that was said to exist in Atlantis. Actually, this metal is an alloy that we know today as brass..... There is also that kind of theory.)

(Then, this world is Atlantis as expected——)

(But, there's also a possibility that the legend of Atlantis itself is just a fiction that Plato wrote.)

(What)

Ren felt let-down. But, he felt that Riona was smirking at faraway.

(Do you forget, Rokuhara-san? A flood also occurred at the end of Trojam War. It also almost happened at Norse mythology's Ragnarok. Noah's ark that came out in the story of Ararat Mountain was also one of flood myths. Perhaps, one of that kind of myth is the original material of Atlantis.)

Ren noticed when she pointed that out.

(You're right. Certainly, there was a lot of flood at the worlds that I visited!)

(A great flood destroying the world——. It's a motif that circulated a lot throughout the world. Most likely it was the migration of people talking Indo-European languages that spread it out. And then, this Hyperborea is the “aftermath” of that kind of flood myth.....)

(Aftermath?)

(In other words perhaps this world is 『the world after Atlantis (temp) was sunk by a great flood』 .)

(So that's how it is!)

(This is still nothing more than a hypothesis though. That's why I want some clue. If there is some kind of new discovery, please tell me. Also, remember to immediately call me at the crucial moment. I'll fly away from

this island no matter what the honorable master say and hurriedly join the fight over there!)

The reason why Riona didn't firmly refuse becoming a disciple. In short it was because 『she could talk with him anytime like this, and it also wouldn't be difficult to meet up by flying』. However.

(—Ah)

(Did something happen, Riona?)

(N, no. A slightly strange feeling is—don't tell me! Honorable master!?)

(Riona!?)

It was so sudden. There was no reply even when he sent his thought.

Fumika seemed to think it was strange that Ren was completely silent during the telepathy. She called out to him.

「What's the matter Rokuhara-san?」

「My connection with Riona is—cut off. It's like a phone call getting disconnected.」

「Fueeh!?!」

「Could this be, Luo Hao-san's work?」

Ren tilted his head in front of the surprised Fumika.

Then a slight weight was added on his left shoulder. The small goddess Stella appeared.

「That must be it. If it's that woman, there's no doubt that she can also do something like that. But, more importantly right now—look over there. Stop the ship too!」

Ren hurriedly lowered down the yacht's sail with Fumika's cooperation.

The favorable wind that came from who knew where stopped, the boat's speed was also getting slow.

And then, ahead of where Stella pointed—there was an animal's corpse drifting lightly on the sea. It was a really big bull with golden fur.

Stella yelled.

「The swelling of the divine force isn't normal. It's starting!」

「Ooh!?!」

「Fueeeeeeeeh!?!」

Under the gaze of the three of them, the expansion began.

The corpse of the bull drifting on the sea bloated up, and it became an island. They finally reencountered this miracle since their second day in Hyperborea.

An island that was covered with greenery and had animals and birds living on it was born in around one hour—.

Stella muttered to herself after witnessing such divine mystery.

「Animal sacrifice..... With the death of a sacred beast that raise up land, the land in this world is expanded. So Hyperborea is that kind of sanctuary!」

「Fuwaa, it was shockiing.」

「Come to think of it, until now we always got Riona carrying us through the sky.」

Ren muttered beside Fumika who was watching with her eyes opened wide.

「Because of that we didn't notice the corpse of animal drifting on the sea! I've to report this to Riona right away!」

However, no matter how hard he sent this thought—

There was no reply from his fiancée. The connection of Rokuhara Ren and Toba Riona was obviously severed. Most likely it was an interference from Luo Cuilian.....

.

In the end, they continued the sea voyage with his link to Riona still severed.

On the way Stella pointed at the sea surface once more. The corpse of animal drifting at where she pointed bloated up against while they were watching and became an island.

「But the corpse just now, rather than animal it looked like a “caterpillar”.」

「Ye, yes-. It had a lot of legs like centipede, it was really disgusting!」

Ren and Fumika said. Stella told them with a sour look.

「That too was also an animal of sacrifice. An offering that was offered as sacrifice for the creation of heaven and earth.....or it should be.」

「Should be?」

「You’re annoying. Somehow I’m getting a clear picture of what kind of place this world is. I’ll teach you, so shut up for a bit!」

It seemed that Stella sensed various things using her spiritual instinct as goddess.

However she wasn’t a god of wisdom by any means. The goddess of beauty and love made a complicated expression for a while in thought, then she suddenly opened her mouth.

「Ren. Do you remember about the unsophisticated Midgard? Regarding the origin of that world, the bird girl talked about it as though she had seen

it from somewhere wasn't it?」

「Origin?」

「At the time when Midgard had just been born and there wasn't even any sea or land. One giant died and the corpse became a land, the flowing out blood became a sea—. Gods and new giants were also born from that corpse.....that story.」

「Aa. Certainly she said something like that.」

「We are right now witness the same thing like that.」

「What do you mean?」

「At Midgard a giant died and became a continent. In Hyperborea, bull or insect died and created island. In short the difference is only the scale. With the dead of animal of sacrifice, their corpse became land.Actually this kind of story exists everywhere in mythological world.」

「Hee!」

「.....While we're talking, another animal is drifting this way.」

Stella suddenly pointed at the sea surface.

A soft and flabby meat lump with indeterminate form was floating this way. From a glance, Fumika commented with shuddering expression.

「Uuu-. It look a bit like starfish, it's a bit disgusting.」

「Is that so? That thing, depending on how you look at it, it can look like 『human』 you know?」

Ren tried focusing on the meat lump after the small goddess pointed out.

Certainly there were four protuberances on the meat lump that looked like arms and legs.....

.

And then at the second day of the sea voyage in the afternoon, they arrived at a large port city.

Over there a hero who seemed to be the sun god Apollo was a hot topic of the town.

Ren heard about the hero's destination without any trouble at all, then he obtained a horse carriage in exchange of gold dust. He also got a guide to take them until the cave where the one who expanded the land and his group disappeared into—.

The land travel ended safely without any accident.

「We arrive.」

「Uuuu-. My stomach is getting hurt again~」

Thus Rokuhara Ren and his companions came in front of a large cave.

It was said to be an entrance that was connected to the underworld at the depth of earth. In fact, a scent that should be called as sweet rotten smell was drifting from inside the cave.

This was undoubtedly miasma. He had experienced this too in the uproar of Yomotsuhirasaka.

For normal human, their life might be in danger if they breathed it in. However, it wasn't a threat against the godslayer, the tiny goddess, and Tamayori Hime—.

「Let's go.」

Ren stood at the front with a torch in hand.

Stella sat on his left shoulder, while right behind him Fumika was following with a fearful look.

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Around one hour passed in order for them to get through the cave that was locked in darkness.

They arrived at a grey colored wasteland. Dry sand was floating in the air thickly. Sometimes there would rock mountain. The sky had poisonous purple color.

And then the dry ground was full of fissures as far as they could see—.

「It looks like an outrageously great earthquake has just occurred here.」

Ren muttered.

Cracks were running to every direction on the ground before them like stitches.

There were fissures that even children could jump over, but there were also parts where the ground was opened for more than ten meter wide. There were protuberances here and there, making the ground uneven.

It wasn't a ground where they could walk properly—and then when they were at a loss of where to go.

A roar of a demon beast resounded.

ooooooooooooOOOOOOOOOOOO!

A gigantic snake crawled out from a remarkably large fissure—no. It had limbs like lizard and wings growing from its back that looked like bat's wings.

「Dra-dra-dra-dra-dra, dragon! I finally encountered one in reality~!」

「What, that dragon!? It's really full of murderous intent! A mere land dragon is intending to harm this daughter of sea and land Aphrodite!?」

Fumika was shouting with a tearful voice, while Stella was feeling indignation. And then Ren was—

「So its target is me!」

The land dragon which was a giant monster was looking down on him grimly.

It was a gaze that was filled with ominous killing intent. Fumika quickly screamed.

「Fumika-chan you find shelter! It look really strong but, I think I won't have a hard time against it. I'll take care of it quickly!」

「Ye, yes-」

「Be careful Ren-. That dragon is a bit strange!」

Fumika ran away, while Stella fused with Ren's body.

At that time, Ren quickly entered his accelerated state. Suddenly the land dragon swung down its front leg to crush him. Naturally he dodged.

「Eh?」

Four large claws that were like long sword came down. Of course he dodged.

「Why?」

He also skillfully dodged the blue flame the land dragon breathed by instantly jumping back for more than ten meters. However.

「My body feel heavy somehow.....?」

The dragon swung around its large tail.

If it hit, Ren's tiny body would be mowed down and grinded to paste.

He immediately jumped in evasion. When he landed, the land dragon's claw, fire breath, tail, and neck stretched out toward him to bite—

Ren dodged, dodged, he dodged everything with his godspeed escaping feet.

During this time, he was feeling an uncomfortable feeling all the time.

His feet and body were gradually getting heavier. Sharpness and speed were also disappearing from his movement.

「What's with this!?!」

Even though the land dragon's front leg should be swung down in slow motion.

It approached *byuu!* like lightning and Ren got hit directly. The dragon's four claws were long and sharp like iron sword.

Ren—felt his torso and limbs tore to pieces.

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Thus, Rokuhara Ren was torn into pieces.

The torso that was ripped up gruesomely and his neck above were separated from each other. His four limbs were also torn away to somewhere. He was turned into quite the splatter.

Fresh blood was spreading like a bog. There was no more light within the opened pupils.

And then—no, regardless of that, Ren was thinking hectically.

(It got me. Will I die like this.....wait, eh?)

Ren's flesh body was torn into pieces.

And yet, Ren's brain was still working——

(No, wrong!)

Right now he was looking down to the ground from the sky.

The ground of the underworld that was full of cracks and fissures. On the ground was 『fragments of Rokuhara Ren's body』 that were scattered to everywhere. And then the land dragon. The terrifying monster finally stopped its rage and calmly stared at the flesh of the man it tore to pieces.

Yes. Rokuhara Ren was undoubtedly dead on the ground just as his appearance suggested.

In that case, what was his current self that was overlooking everything from the sky?

Floating lightly in the air was a youngster who looked exactly the same like Rokuhara Ren when he was alive. For some reason he was stark naked and his body was half transparent.

It was like he was a soul that was separated from his flesh body..... Ren was astonished.

(Could it be I, became a ghost like Umayado no Ouji!?)

(That's right Ren.)

A reply came from right beside him in respond to his talk to himself.

When he looked there, Stella was also floating beside him. Her minimum body that was thirty centimeter tall wasn't covered by even a single string, her white naked skin was halfway transparent——.

Stella or goddess of love Aphrodite. She and Ren were one in body and heart.

She ended up in a same state like this because Ren's body became like that. Stella told him.

(But if I have to add, you are in the stage of 『almost becoming a ghost』 . If your revival finishes without any problem like this, then your soul will return to your flesh body.)

(Revival you say?)

Ren was floating in the air while talking with the small goddess.

(Is that, because I'm someone who killed a god?)

(That's not a bad guess. Listen well. The underworld of this Hyperborea you see, it's a place where the 『death and revival』 of the heroes are determined by the string of fate and repeated as though it's inevitable.)

Stella spoke of the principle of the world with a solemn look.

It was extremely rare but, there were times when she showed a dignity befitting her status as goddess.

(That's why, "someone with power" who visited the depth of the earth will inevitably visited by hardship and lose unless they are blessed by a great fortune. Ren, a godslayer like you are recognized by the 《fate manipulating string》 that rule over this Hyperborea—that you are someone with power.)

(Even though I'm not even a god?)

(Yes. War god, hero, devil, and then godslayer. Existence who make other people submit with their power will equally become a target of the 『death and rebirth. This place is that kind of sanctuary.』

As expected, even this debauched goddess was also one of the transcendental gods.

She was talking smoothly with dignified tone.

(This death in the end is the beginning of resurrection. Just as the fate determined, Rokuhara Ren's flesh body will begin to revive one day.....is how it is but)

Here Stella suddenly became “non-serious”.

(The revival, might not begin. I guess it's a slightly tricky line.....)

(Eh? Isn't it already determined by fate!?)

(This is in the end a divine matter. The string that is manipulating fate is making it easier to reproduce 《the tale of hero who overcome tribulation and conquer even death》——. Ren and I visited this place without any preparation whatsoever and got killed so.....)

Stella mumbled wearily. Ren asked.

(It's bad if there's no preparation?)

(It's bad. As I thought, I think we should have prepared beforehand things like burial accessories, or souls of vassal and believer, or sacrifice in order to promote the revival of a great one.)

(Uwaa. I wish I know that sooner!)

(I, it can't be helped-. I too have all these things finally clicked in my mind only after coming all the way to this depth of earth!)

Stella who returned to her usual mood and Ren were getting all flustered together.

Right now the two of them were floating in the air as ghost. Below was Rokuhara Ren that got torn into pieces on the cracked ground. And then, the land dragon that finally crouched and rested its body——.

Ren immediately suggested.

(That's right. Let's use the Circle of Friendship. We'll call a friend to help us!)

(That'll be difficult. Our authority belongs to both the physical body and the soul. With one of them destroyed, we won't be able to exert considerable strength. Even if we call Goddess Aphrodite's friend, if it's not someone who is really nearby—)

Stella gasped and looked down to the ground.

Rose colored light was slightly emitted from the whole body of the slender tiny goddess.

(Hey, you! If it's alright please lends your strength to Rokuhara Ren and Aphrodite! So that we can revive once more—!)

(Eh? Why are you relying on that guy?)

Ren pointed at the land dragon and questioned.

It was lying face down and coiled like a snake. The monster that suddenly attacked Rokuhara Ren and tore him into pieces.

(That's the culprit who killed us!)

(It was only manipulated by the string of fate. In order to reenact the 『death and rebirth of one with power』. But the dragons and snakes living at the depth of earth are originally Aphrodite's sworn friends!)

Stella declared strongly.

(Remember! Goddesses like us are daughter of water and land. We're willowy ladies and embodiment of beauty and love. But, actually—we will also transform into terrifying demon beast too sometimes. Into monsters like dragon, serpent, gorgon, or the like!)

(Eh? Stella also has that kind of monster form!?)

(Of course! Well, now that I become one with Ren I also cannot do that kind of transformation, but that kind of dragon and snake is like our relatives. It should be really easy to ask them to lend us their help——!)

Sure enough, the land dragon was slowly rising up.

Completely different from before, it was looking at the spirit body of Stella and Ren that were floating in the air with a gentle gaze. It opened its mouth greatly.

A light sphere that was shining green was let out from its mouth that had sharp fangs lined up.

The moment they were swallowed by that light, Ren felt his spirit body was filled with something that should be called as 『wave of strength』 .

(Amazing. I felt power charging me rapidly.....)

(That land dragon shared its vitality with us! But Ren, this is a power that transform compassionate earth mother goddess into terrifying dragon. Be careful that you don't get controlled by it!)

.

Seven days and seven nights passed since the 『death』 of the radiant Apollo.

During that time, the souls of the people who died together with him didn't leave but stayed beside their lord. Which was, beside the remains that were torn apart.

The souls of people who followed their lord to the grave were crying and yelling as much as they could.

O radiant god, please come back to life.

O long shooting god, please come back to life.

We are praying for your revival. Praying. Praying. Praying!

That prayers and lamentations created a force field that called in the determined fate. And then, that time finally came.

Seven days and seven nights passed since the fate of death. He slowly lifted up his body.

The radiant Apollo wasn't in pieces anymore. There wasn't a single scratch on his muscular tall body. His body was covered with lithe and tough muscles.

He was wearing white garment combined with a red mantle, and golden gauntlets.

In his hand was a silver bow. It was a tool that Apollo was the most skilled at along with lyre.

「Fufufu. My ambition is finally completed.」

Apollo made a ruffian smile.

His forehead was decorated with hair ornament of laurel leaves. His appearance wasn't any different from before—no. Right now Apollo's whole body was enveloped in silver aura.

『Splendid. I shall confer the words of blessing to Apollo who obtain even brighter divine light.』

「Goddess Athena huh.」

There was a withered tree in this underworld. An owl was perching on its branch.

「I'm honored that you purposefully sent a messenger here. How is your journey doing?」

『I am also having no problem. One day I too will accomplish my ambition.』

Athena borrowed the owl's beak to let out a meaningful chuckle.

『Kukukuku. Come to think of it, Orpheus who descended to the underworld despite being only a minstrel. A man who liberated her dead wife from the world of the dead..... It seems that man was actually a priest of the sun god Apollo wasn't it?』

「So you knew.」

Apollo smiled.

「Indeed. That person obeyed “the way to walk the underworld” that I taught him and fulfilled his wish.」

『You were also the one who killed the sacred bull. Just like how the gods who possessed the name Mithra, Mitra did so..... O radiant one, you were also 《a god of light who came from the east》 in the past.』

Mithra. Mitra. Maitreya.

The gods who were worshipped at the far east from the land of ancient Greece.

Athena talked as though singing those names. Apollo laughed.

「It makes me bashful that a great goddess like you know about my origin!」

『Athena is a goddess of wisdom. How can I not know that much.』

「Hahahaha, certainly.Now then, I shall begin the finishing touch. It's finally the time for me to obtain the flame of destruction.」

『Umu. But, listen to this before that. A sign of bad luck has appeared above your head.』

「What?」

『Don't let your guard down until you remove every obstruction. May the fortunes of war be with you.』

The owl only said that before disappearing.

Apollo muttered 「Fumu」 , then he slowly looked behind. He could see a young man walking straight toward him.

Of course, it was his old acquaintance, a young man who didn't have a single wound on his body.

「So it's you as I thought, godslaying beast.」

The one who came was that person, Rokuhara Ren.

However unlike before, he was giving off a terrible killing intent. His gaze was sharp and stared grimly at Apollo.

His face looked awfully violent. Apollo noticed from a glance.

「Even though you departed later than me, you already finished the death and rebirth. It seemed that a really powerful divine spirit gave you their assistance.」

The godslayer called Rokuhara Ren was always easygoing.

However right now he was having a murderous look that he had never showed before. His whole body was bursting with undulating power.

「Fufu. It's good that you held on to your life but—aren't you being too high spirited?」

In contrast Apollo was elegantly smiling till the end.

.

3

(Ren! Isn't it better to calm down a bit!?)

Stella's voice pleaded in his ear. Her appearance wasn't visible. She was warning him from the inside even while being fused with Rokuhara Ren's body.

In respond to the worried small goddess, Ren replied to her coldly with a tone that was "unlike him".

「.....It's fine. I'm, calm enough.」

Right now, sun god Apollo was in front of him. He finally found him.

Ren's gaze that was glaring at the radiant handsome youth was so dangerous it surprised even himself.

「What happen with Cassandra?」

「Who knows. I only revived just now. It's not a question that I can answer. But, I still have no intention to return that princess to you. I ask you to leave.」

「Then—I'll just take her back with brute force.」

Ren spoke with a cold tone again.

In fact, his heart was feeling the coldest he had ever felt. If it was now he could sock Apollo's handsome face with his right straight without even a twitch in his eyebrow. And then, he would crush that suspicious nonchalant look into a mess.

After that he would bite his throat and tore his carotid artery—.

He had that kind of dangerous feeling. His instinct wouldn't stop seeking for a hunt and strife.

And yet despite that, there was no sensation that 『his blood was boiling』 . It was the opposite. The blood in his whole body was freezing. In order to warm himself he wanted to consign his enemy to oblivion and showered his head with their blood.....

Ren thought. Perhaps.

The 『snakes』 that were cold blooded animal and also hunter might be fighting with this kind of feeling.

This must be the influence from the vitality that he received from the land dragon before this. Rokuhara Rne right now was changing into an existence that should be called “cold blooded predator”——.

「Then, here I come.」

Ren shortly said and started walking carelessly.

He was stepping forward with brisk pace straight toward Apollo from the front. He didn't even put up any guard and his hands were limply dangling down

—.

「You're being really defenseless there!」

(Be careful! Apollo was the god who invented boxing!)

The long shooting sun god punched with a left straight toward the approaching Ren.

The left fist that was holding the silver bow punched as it was. And then Stella yelled from inside Rokuhara Ren—the next moment.

GA-! Ren dealt a counterattack at Apollo from behind!

「Guoh——!?!」

「Amazing. You don't fall from the counter just now. As expected from a god.」

Although Apollo pitched forward, he braced his legs and avoided falling.

And then, Ren was standing behind the sun god. He had just dealt Nemesis's Retributive Justice just now. He activated his godspeed and circled behind, and then he sent the power of the left straight to the back of the head of the youthful god.

If it was a human, that strike to the back of the head and rain would be a matter of life and death.

But, Apollo turned around calmly and nocked arrow of light on his silver bow.

「I see, so you give no mercy!」

Hyun, hyun, hyun, hyun, hyun, hyun!

He fired arrows rapidly from close distance. He summoned arrows, nocked them, pulled the string, and fired. Even though four motions were needed for each shot, his rapid firing speed was like machine.

If it was the usual Ren then he would dodge while piling up “stock” of Retributive Justice.

But, right now he couldn't go against his impulse to attack——!

「I ask for the judgment of justice right here!」

His right hand with its middle finger and index finger jointed together flashed to every direction.

He pressed the arrowhead of the light arrows approaching him with the two fingers of Nemesis. Then all the arrows were rebounding back toward their shooter Apollo.

The track that was drawn by the two fingers moving in godspeed was just like lighting that was rushing through the air.

「Oo!?!」

Apollo was shocked. His whole body was surrounded by jet black mist.

The rain of arrows returning to him was wholly swallowed by the mysterious mist. As expected from the god who boasted the greatest fighting prowess in Olympus.

「That's a way of fighting that is unlike you, Rokuhara Ren.」

「Do you know about me so well that you can say something like that?」

「I know. When I saw you in the battle of Troia, I secretly felt an omen of confrontation. Since then, I came to observe you at every opportunity.」

Apollo was making his usual ruffian smile.

「So that I'll be able to thoroughly beat you down no matter what time or situation it is.」

「So you've finished researching me. Apollo-san is really hardworking huh.」

Riona called him as the heaven-sent child of reasoning.

In that case, the godslaying beast ought to follow their wildness to the end. Especially because Rokuhara Ren right now had obtained the vitality of dragon and his killing instinct was heightened to an unprecedented degree.

He licked his lips briefly.

It was truly an act of licking one's lips.

On the other hand, sun god Apollo was nodding with perfect composure.

「I see. It seems you right now aren't the Rokuhara Ren I know. You're changing into a man who is more dangerous than usual after obtaining an unusual strength in an unusual time.」

「Thank you for the praise. Will my counter be enough to show my thanks?」

「No, that wasn't a praise.」

Apollo grinned.

「I'm simply unable to see your pace right now because of that unusual strength. And then, this place is the underworld that spread out at the depth of earth—there is also a power that Apollo can use because of that.....」

「What did you say!?!」

「O land, answer the son of Goddess Leto and also one who is walking the country of the dead Apollo!」

Apollo chanted the words of power loudly.

Then the ground was shaking, and one, two, three, countless large fissures were forming.

In addition the ground was fiercely undulating, ripping open, then landslide occurred.

Ren was swallowed up by that raging quake and slipped off along with the earth and sand—.

「Waaaaah!?!」

(Come to think of it, Apollo's mother is a goddess of land Leto!)

Stella yelled inside Ren.

(When she gave birth to him, she intentionally hid underground. And then, the place we're at right now is the underworld that spread at the depth of earth—! If it's here then he can also use the authority of land as Leto's son!)

The skillfulness in tactic to deal with frenzied godslayer.

As expected from Apollo. Rokuhara Ren was made to taste his villainous method and fell deep into the earth while being swallowed by landslide.

He also tried to heighten the magic power he had to maximum to oppose Apollo's authority.

However, it was already too late. Ren's field of vision was filled with blackness by the earth and sand falling down on him.

.

「It's finished unexpectedly quick.」

Apollo was satisfied that the obstruction was removed.

He stared at the ground that became cracked and fissured everywhere and also excessively rugged due to protrusions and landslides. Rokuhara Ren was falling 『underneath』 this.

He could also meet his attack in a direct confrontation, but the time was bad.

Apollo who had only just revived had something that he had to prioritize.

「Now, let's go. I have to hunt a beast once more.」

Apollo turned his back on the battlefield with Rokuhara Ren and walked away.

It wasn't enough to just revive. He had to accomplish his revenge against the great enemy that levied the trial of 『death』 on him before his mission was accomplished for the first time.

After that he would line up a lot of offering—

「Oo Paeon. The ceremony of fire is near. I'm the one who offer the sacrifice of a hundred bulls. The one who expand the land and illuminate the heaven and earth with fire and light.....」

Apollo hummed the eulogy about himself.

.

4

‘I see’. Ren learned his own weak point through unforeseen form.

He was suddenly swallowed up by a sudden landslide and got buried alive. He couldn’t evacuate using Nemesis’s authority. At that time Apollo interfered with the ground itself. He didn’t make any move toward Ren himself.

Goddess Nemesis’s godspeed till the end was a measure of 『when he was attacked by other』 .

No. Ren rethought.

Even if that was the case, if it was the usual him—the Rokuhara Ren who would prioritize evasion and escape first, wouldn’t he be able to activate his godspeed escape in a hair’s breadth?

However, at that time his focus tilted too much toward attacking that he couldn’t protect himself.....

Apollo must have calculated until that far.

Thus Rokuhara Ren was buried underground.

His whole body was weighed down by soil. He even tasted gravel inside his mouth. He could only see darkness. He could only smell soil. There was no future for him other than getting crushed to death like this or ran out of breath—

(Eh?)

Ren suddenly noticed.

(It’s not that hard to breath.....)

(That’s right Ren.)

Stella who was fused with him sent him her thought.

(It seems that you finally tame down the land dragon's vitality.)

(Ah, yeah. Looks like my head cool down a bit from getting buried alive. But, even though it feels like I'm buried underground from my head until my toes, why am I all right like this!?)

(Obviously. You got the vitality of land dragon shared with you.)

Stella was completely composed compared to the perplexed Ren.

(The vitality of a beast living at the depth of earth is dwelling inside your body, so there is no way you will die even if you sunk into earth. Thanks to that you narrowly escaped death.)

The devil's luck of Rokuhara Ren and Stella hadn't run out yet it seemed.

However because he was buried underground, he couldn't even move a finger. His body couldn't even twitch. He had to do something somehow.

(If I obtained the power of land dragon——)

Ren imagined. The long wriggly body bending back and forth, digging soil with snout nose, advancing forward. He tried moving like snake——no, like earthworm, what if he did this?

He deeply concentrated, and imagined. A snake or rather an earthworm wriggling through the soil seeking air.....

His body moved with 『slippery』 motion to the direction of the top of his head. It felt like that. *Slid, slid* He kept advancing, and then finally——

「Uwah!？」

Suddenly, Ren's body was spat out to the air. He managed to escape.

When he noticed, his body was lying on the dry ground after getting thrown out. His body and clothes that were covered with soil now got even more

dirtied with dry sand.

Ren stood up and breathed in air to his heart's content.

As expected even though he was godslayer, a human wanted to at least breath freely.

「Where is this.....?」

Ren looked around.

It seemed he was on the bottom of ravine. It was a small path that was between steep cliffs. The path was so narrow that a minitruck could pass through it only barely.

When he looked up, the sky of the underworld was stretching out. It was the purple sky that looked poisonous.

Stella popped out on his left shoulder.

「This is the bottom of fissure that was caused by that land dragon and Apollo, perhaps.」

「I see. —Hm?」

Right after Ren nodded at Stella's thought, he noticed.

There was a person lying down slightly ahead. No. That might be—he immediately dashed.

「Did he fall into this fissure, and die.....」

It was a young man who looked to be around thirty years old. The impact of the fall must be the cause. His neck was bent. He died with a look of ecstasy.

After praying for the dead person's happiness in the next world, Ren started walking through the ravine path.

After walking for awhile, he hit a bend on the path.

He came out to an open space the moment he turned the corner.
Surprisingly that place was filled with heaps of corpses all around.

「What's, this.....?」

「It looks like everyone is Hyperborea people. They aren't the dead of the underworld.....」

Ren was astounded. Stella pointed out.

Certainly everyone was wearing Hyperborea attire. They were different from the zombies he encountered in the incident of Yomotsu Hirasaka.

There were those with face of happiness, but there were also cramped faces that died in fear and despair.

There were also faces that were filled with anguish, faces that had given up hope.

「The cause of every phenomenon lie in the past. O fate, show me the entanglement of karma.」

Ren kneeled and touched the ground.

He joined his index finger and middle finger that were 『Nemesis's divine two fingers』, to read the trace of karma that was carved into this land.

—The populace led by the one who expand the land, Apollo.

—Descending to the underworld together with the chosen hero.

—And then the sudden dead to follow their lord to the grave. Their souls were offered as sacrifice for Apollo's revival.....

「What in the world」

「Unlike us, Apollo was thoroughly prepared wasn't he.....」

Ren muttered in a daze, while Stella shuddered.

Ren who was one in body and heart with her understood. Although they were fellow gods, the goddess of love Aphrodite was feeling really sacred to her compatriot's cruelty.

And then, Ren swore to fulfill the retributive justice.

Good results should accompany good deed. Bad results should accompany bad deed—.

Ren walked around randomly among the heaps of corpses in order to burn into his eyes all the state of death of the people who were sacrificed.

「Even though some time had passed since they died, they aren't rotting.....」

「This place is the realm of the dead. The state of death, the fate of the body and soul are different from the surface.」

While walking and talking with the small goddess riding on his left shoulder,

Ren discovered—something that should not happen no matter what.

The silver haired beautiful princess Cassandra was also lying on the bottom of this ravine. Her beautiful eyes were closed as an unspeaking corpse.

Her face told of a calm death.

.

「Ren. Let's leave now.」

「.....」

「Ren. Ren.」

Stella called him several times.

However, Ren didn't say anything. He turned his back on the worried goddess, sat on the ground, and did nothing except staring at Cassandra's corpse.

For now, he folded her hands on her stomach.

Because her face in death was very beautiful, there was no need to adjust her face for her. Fixing her disheveled clothes was more than enough to tidy up her corpse. Even her face that was said to be the most beautiful in Greek mythology and her lithe body had no wound that stood out.

That was why, what was left was only to grieve over Princess Cassandra's death.

But Ren couldn't do that.

There was sadness inside his heart. There was despair. There was anger.

Anger toward himself that didn't make it in time to save Cassandra. Anger toward Apollo who caused her death. And above all else, anger to the so called fate that pushed this kind of result to her.

However, Ren himself was aware.

Something that was bigger than any kind of emotion was occupying his heart.

If he had to describe it in words, that was most likely a 『will』 .

The virtuous Cassandra who shouldn't have any single reason why she ought to die young. This will absolutely couldn't accept her death.

If it was for the sake of carrying out this will, then he would be fine even if he had to kill a god—.

「Come to think of it, Princess Cassandra met an untimely death after the destruction of Troia. That was the “correct outline of mythology” wasn't it?」

Could it be, that debt came back at this place.....

Stella muttered in disappointment. Ren finally reacted.

「But, we rewrote that.」

「Ren!?!」

「That's if the outline of mythology is this fate thingy. Thinking back, Cassandra already change that once. There's no reason why she can't do it the second time.」

He stared at the laid down Troia princess with dark eyes while——

Ren declared quietly.

His right hand's index finger and middle finger. He touched Cassandra's forehead with the two fingers that embodied Retributive Justice Nemesis and closed his eyes.

Behind his eyelids, a certain scene was resurrected vividly.

——Just before the untimely death came, Cassandra ran to save a girl who was going to die.

——However in the end they fell together into the fissure.....

「It's strange. I have done it several times, absorbing the 『memory of sin』 that is carved into that land and handed down retributive justice to the wrongdoer who committed the deed but..... Compared to before——I can read the memory clearly here.」

For example, when he visited some places in Troia.

He absorbed the memory of brutality that was repeated by Greek soldiers in that country, and later on he fulfilled retributive justice toward the whole Greek army in the form of 『reviving twenty thousand corpses of Troia soldiers that were massacred until now and made them counterattack』 .

Nemesis's authority wasn't a simple cross counter. Ren muttered.

「Is this also because I received the land dragon's power?」

「No. It's because this is the realm of the dead.」

Stella easily answered.

「You see, a living person, no matter what kind of divine protection from god they have, when they pass under the gate of underworld, they receive “temporary death”. In other words, their time stop at that point of time.」

「The time stop?」

「Yes. That's why their corpse doesn't rot even when they receive “the second death”, it's also easier for them to receive the influence of authority that control 『karma of past and present』 like Nemesis.」

「So it's just as I thought.」

Stella verbalized the matter that he had been vaguely suspecting.

Ren's lips twisted slightly into a shape that was similar with a smile. The small goddess who was one in body and heart with him gasped.

「Stop it Ren! If you do something reckless like that, you too won't end up unscathed!」

「Even so it's worth trying.」

Ren instantly answered.

「I have to save Cassandra no matter what. A good result should accompany a good act, right? Now that it's decided then I should move with haste.」

「Don't! Manipulation of cause and effect that play with the past and future is really——」

The figure of Stella who tried to say something abruptly vanished.

Ren intended to pour all his strength into the act of retributive justice that he would attempt from now. He would use up all his magic power until even the share that Stella used to materialize.

Ren chanted Nemesis's scripture.

「I desire to the goddess of justice and retribution.....」

He touched Cassandra's forehead once more with the two fingers of justice embodiment Nemesis.

「Good result should accompany good deed. One who save life should be blessed with life!」

The whole body of Troia princess was enveloped with white light.

Just before her death, she tried to save other person's life rather than herself. That beauty of the heart ought to be awarded with the blessing from the 《goddess of justice and retribution Nemesis》.

Life could only be compensated with life——

In order to realize that retribution, Ren mustered all his magic power.

But, at the same time with that, a pain like there was a drill shredding his lung and heart ran through him many times. Furthermore it was endless. The more he poured his strength into using the authority, the pain increased all the more——.

「.....Ah, I see.」

Ren noticed.

If life could only be compensated with life, then Rokuhara Ren also had to pay that price. However, without even a moment of hesitation——Ren smiled fiercely.

「Thinking back, my life was also saved by Cassandra!」

When he was slashed by the hero Ajax the Lesser at Troia.

His life was saved by the dedication of the kind princess. Ren didn't forget it.

「The retributive justice also include the share from where you saved me! I'm counting on you Nemesis-san!」

His personal affair was accomplished. He obtained such conviction splendidly.

But, in exchange he could hear a strange noise from inside his body.
Snap-. Snap-. It was the sound of his lung and heart ripping miserably.

He had played rehearsal of death several times in just this day.

It seemed that it would finally be the main act.

.

5

「Uuuuu-. To become alone at this kind of place~」

Fumika was aimlessly wandering while on the verge of tears.

She was smack dab in the middle of dry wasteland. There was also almost no plants growing here. The blowing wind was cold. She was feeling terribly lonely.

It was already terribly dreary just from the scenery. This place was the underworld.

Even Tamayori Hime who possessed moderate spiritual ability might not be able to stay safe here for long.

「But, it feels like it will still be dangerous even if I return to Rokuhara-san's place. What should I do~!?!」

Just as she was instructed, Fumika ran away from the battlefield in full speed.

Unlike her big sister, she didn't really have power that would be useful in battlefield. She desperately ran without even looking back, and when her breathing didn't last she desperately walked.

Thanks to that she was able to take quite the distance, and yet.

「Which way I should walk to return to the previous place.....?」

If her strict big sister was beside her, she would get scolded for her carelessness.

She was lost in this kind of emergency time. It was quite the blunder even if she said so herself. Furthermore, *goso-* she certainly heard a sound from behind her. She timidly looked back—.

「I, it come ouuttt!?!」

Behind her was something that perhaps should be called an imp.

Its height wasn't that different from a child nine or ten years old. However, not a single hair grew from its body, its smooth skin was bizarrely pale.

Its two eyeballs were so big that they occupied half of its face, its expression was extremely ferocious—

There was six of it. The imps let out threatening voice.

Shaaaaaah!

They all had sharp teeth.

「Hiiiiih! Are they carnivore ghoul just as expected!?!」

Goddess Izanami of Yomotsuhirasaka had retainers called Yomotsu Shikome and Yomotsu Ikusa.

They were residence of the realm of the dead and the same kind with zombies. These imps were most likely similar existences. Of course they were staring at Fumika murderously!

When she went ‘hyah’ and shrunk into herself, Fumika heard a nostalgic voice.

「Begone you lowlives! This girl is my vessel!」

When Fumika noticed a slender young man was standing beside her.

The man with handsome face that reminded one of Maitreya Bodhisattva smoothly unsheathed his straight sword from his waist and quickly slashed the ground. The tip hit a pebble and scattered several sparks.

Furthermore the sparks increased in number and became a large brilliance—it attacked the imps!

SHaaaaaAAAAAAH!

The residences of underworld were scared off. They ran away like baby spiders scattering everywhere.....

「Ta, Taishi-sama?」

「Indeed I am Umayado. It’s good that you’re in good health.」

Umayado no Ouji answered with his familiar magnanimity while sheathing his straight sword.

Of course Fumika was astonished.

「Why are you here!?!」

「Fool. What is this land? It’s the underworld spreading in the depth of earth, the realm of the dead. Even if it’s the underworld of Sanctuary

Hyperborea, it's a familiar land the dead like me.」

「Ah, I see.」

Ghost of the dead would obtain vitality in the realm of the dead. It was logical now that she was told that.

Fumika understood and unashamedly relied on him. She awkwardly made an ingratiating smile.

「Say, what should I do from here? Do Taishi-sama understand Rokuhara-san's location?」

「Fumu.」

The person who knew things before it happened, Umayado no Ouji looked at the distance with his long-slitted eyes.

「Tamayori Hime. Clear your heart and search for the presence. The godslayer is where the spirits are swarming and the smell of death is exceptionally thick.」

「Tha, that sounds like an absurdly scary place isn't it-!?!」

However her only living acquaintance in this underworld was only Rokuhara Ren.

Fumika reluctantly concentrated her mind and sharpened her senses.

.

「Nn.....」

「Have you awakened, Ren-sama?」

When he realized he was laid down on the ground.

However, there was a blanket spread out. Thanks to that his back didn't feel that hurt. And then, another blanket was placed over Rokuhara Ren and

one other person.

「What's with these blankets?」

「Fortunately there was a lot of companies in my journey. I borrowed a few blankets from the belonging of those people.」

He was lying down face up, so he could clearly see the sky that was colored with poisonous purple.

It seemed that he was at the “bottom of ravine” that was formed from the fissures even now. Ren was laid down on the small path that was between steep cliffs.

But, around him wasn't the tragic scene of the heaps of corpses.

Perhaps the girl who was sleeping together with him worked hard to move him until some distance away.

「You're really strong to carry the sleeping me alone until here.」

「Yes. Even though I look like this I have confidence in my arm. My family is a family of warrior after all♪」

The girl was lying down together with him with her body leaning on his body.

By the way——

Both of them were stark naked for some reason. Surprise must have come out on Ren's expression. The girl who was generously pushing her wonderful body on him spoke in embarrassment.

「Tha, that's, Ren-sama's body was completely cold, so in order to warm it.....」

「Thank you Cassandra.」

Good result should accompany good deed.

Ren caused a miracle at the end of him wholeheartedly desiring for retributive justice.

Of course if 『Cassandra's death』 wasn't a misfortune that occurred in Hyperborea's underworld, and if she didn't display her courage and kindness at the very end, there was no way the miracle would be realized. The miracle came to be because of the assistance of luck and coincidence, in addition of his efforts at the risk of his life.

However—Ren thought that it was strange.

「How am I alive?」

When he revived the maiden in front of him, both of his heart and lungs should be crushed.

Then Cassandra looked hesitating to speak before,

「N, no. Ren-sama too had died completely—for a moment.」

「Eh, really?」

「Yes. Unlike the time when you lost consciousness at the sea of Troia, this time your breath really stopped completely, your heart and lungs also broke, and a lot of blood was vomited from your mouth. But, I felt it. the body of Ren-sama who should have died.....still had vitality remaining.」

「Vitality? Ah, that!」

Ren noticed.

「Just a little while ago a land dragon monster shared its vitality with me.」

「Oh my, is that so! From time immemorial, snake and dragon are existences known as immortal sacred beast by those in the know. Even at the land where we live, snake will shed its old skin whenever the chance arises and rebirth into youthful figure. And so Ren-sama too—」

「Did I become temporarily immortal thanks to the land dragon?」

「That must be the case.」

「Eh, wait?」

Even so his heart and lungs were crushed.

If the land dragon's vitality ran out, wouldn't he undisputedly die next time for sure? Then Cassandra who was still leaning on Ren naked smiled mischievously.

「Actually I possessed something good.」

「Something good?」

「Yes. The talisman of healing that Riona-sama used before..... I felt admiration toward that wonderful miraculous effect and I “begged” Riona-sama for it later, if I too can receive one of it.」

「That thing used to heal me at Troia huh!」

「Riona-sama told me 『There won't be any meaning if you can't use the technique』, even so she generously drew up the talisman. Until now I kept it in my a small pouch and carried it in concealment as good luck amulet but—I thought that this is the time it become necessary.」

Cassandra peered on Ren's face and smiled sweetly.

「When I prayed wholeheartedly, power dwelled inside the talisman of healing. Like that I used it at Ren-sama.....」

「Come to think of it, Cassandra was a priestess at the past wasn't you?」

She was a priestess serving the sun god Apollo and she was recognized by him that he even granted her precognition ability.

In that case, there should be great power even in her prayer. Ren was convinced. In the end, he was able to escape death exactly because of

Cassandra's endeavor.

The willowy princess's lips were slightly dirtied red. That was right.

When applying spell on them godslayer—and then the lips of Ren that vomited a lot of blood from lung hemorrhage were surely soaked with blood.....

Ren and Cassandra kept lying down while embracing each other. Their gaze entangled with each other.

「Let me say my thanks once more. Thank you, Cassandra.」

「I also had my life saved.....and it was for Ren-sama's sake. I, would do anything.」

「.....」

「.....」

There was feeling that was conveyed even if it wasn't said out loud.

Cassandra who was still leaning on Ren suddenly brought her face closer.

Perhaps her body moved by themselves faster than she could think. And then, the feeling of wanting to respond to that also burst out inside Ren—

The lips of the two naturally met. Time passed for a while like that.

And then Cassandra returned to her senses and separated their lips in panic. Ren put his hand on her back to not let her got away.

He tightly embraced her body that was well fleshed enough even though she was thin.

「I, I'm sorry. Even though Ren-sama has already recovered」

「I think there is no need for you to apologize though.」

Ren lifted up his body while still embracing Cassandra.

The blanket above their body fluttered down. The princess's smooth naked body came into view. They ended up in the posture of Ren sitting cross legged and Cassandra sitting on his lap.

The skin's softness, warmth, and elastic sensation of her flesh felt pleasant to his skin.

「But, Ren-sama already has Riona-sama——」

「I really like you Cassandra.」

He whispered into the ear of the princess who wouldn't meet his gaze.

Cassandra went 「!？」 and stiffened within Ren's arms. She became bright red before his eyes. Not just her face, her whole body was blushing.

This time Ren peered straight into the eyes of the lovely girl.

「Cassandra also feel the same right?」

「.....I've yearned for Ren-sama all this time.」





「Yeah, I know.」

「Ren-sama!」

Cassandra finally clung on Ren's neck by her own initiative.

And then, without anyone of them starting it they brought their lips closer to each other and kissed repeatedly as though pecking at each other. During that time Cassandra passionately whispered.

「I, I don't mind, being second to Riona-sama. That's why, please.....」

「I've promised the position of wife to Riona so it belongs to her but, I don't like assigning rank to this kind of feeling.」

「Ren-sama.....」

「I know that I'm only saying something convenient for myself though.」

「No. Right now I feel really happy.」

This time both of them placed their lips on each other and slowly took their time.

They weren't just pushing their lips on each other, they carefully kissed to ascertain each other's feeling and the shape of their lips while Ren sometimes would insert his tongue. Although Cassandra's tongue would stiffen with a jerk for a moment, it would soon soften and welcomed him lovingly.

Like that they continued the deed for a while before Ren suddenly said.

「Right now is a time of emergency so, let's stop at this. The continuation will be able everything is taken care of.」

「Yes, Ren-sama.....」

Cassandra nodded with a smiling face that was the very picture of supreme bliss.

.

「Ro, Rokuhara-san, I wonder if I'll meet him soon?」

Fumika was looking around to all directions restlessly while speaking out her desire.

She followed Umayado no Ouji's instruction and finally managed to return to her previous location. It was around where the dragon rampaged and she parted from Rokuhara Ren.

The ground became riddled with cracks due to the fissures. It was painful to look at.

Umayado no Ouji who guided her as well as protecting her commented with a murmur.

「In my spiritual sight, that guy looked like he is in the middle of a heaps of corpses all around. Tamayori Hime, find out if there is any place like that.」

「Tha, that's scary, so I wish that Rokuhara-san will come out by himself!」

Umayado Ouji walked with composed and cool demeanor without even looking around.

Such attitude was as to be expected from the legendary crown prince. There was a sense of otherworldliness from him.

In contrast, Fumika was the heaven-sent child of modern society who couldn't cut her ties with worldly desires. She didn't know when to give up and kept looking around restlessly.

She wished to meet up with Rokuhara Ren without braving any danger and if possible by omitting any horror event.

She wished that wholeheartedly. And then, in a stroke of good luck she was rewarded. From inside one fissure, her big sister's fiancée climbed up 『hyoi』 with a splendid nimbleness.

Furthermore, he reached out his hand—

And pulled up the beautiful Troia princess.

He perfectly succeeded in rescuing the kindhearted Princess Cassandra!

「Rokuhara-san! Cassandra-san!」

Driven by great joy, Fumika was about to call out to them but,

She swallowed back her words just before that.

Cassandra who was pulled up brought her cheek closer to Rokuhara Ren's face with a smile that was like a flower and said something happily.

It was like their cheeks rubbed each other intimately, and there was even like a kiss on the cheek.....?

Did she, see mistakenly? Fumika doubted her own eyes.

「Eh, Fumika-chan!」

「My, Fumika-sama! Umayado no Taishi-sama too!」

「Oo. Both of you, so the two of you are safe. Splendid.」

Young man Rokuhara waved his hand easygoingly, while Princess Cassandra's smile was growing even wider. Umayado no Ouji calmly greeted them by himself with a blessing.

Fumika alone was distressed by herself while worrying 『Did my eyes get weird!?』 .

The godslayer youth had just gotten engaged with her big sister Toba Riona. There shouldn't be 『something between』 him and Princess

Cassandra—.

Chapter 6 – The One Who Bring Back Light

1

「Ji, jiigaa toku butsurai, shou kyoushou kosshuu, muuryou hyaku senmon, okusai aasougii自我得仏来、所經諸劫数、無量百千万、億載阿僧祇——buhah!? Jo, jousetsu boukyoukee常說法教化a-ouchhhhhh!」

Riona was beaten by a waterfall.

Within the great amount of water that was falling with repetitive splashing sound, she was desperately reciting sutras.

Sometimes water would enter her mouth and she became unable to chant the sutras. Each time that happened, it would come flying. The terrifying voice of the “honorable master” sect master Luo Hao——

「Myouhou renga, busscho gonen妙法蓮華、仏所護念! Pray with all your heart!」

She was scolded by a dignified and lovely voice.

Furthermore, each time she heard that, Riona’s whole body would feel ripping pain.

It wasn’t a metaphor. She would physically feel pain. A vibration like ultrasonic waves would run through Riona’s body from the head until the toes while she was doing waterfall meditation in straight posture and hand pressed together in praying pose.

It was uncertain whether it was magic or a more special power. However.

(Honorable master, she caused a shockwave just by letting out her voice, that's just too monstrous!)

Furthermore she could adjust the strength as she pleased. It was terrifying that she reprimanded her disciple with something like this.

Her costume was a black vestment that was handed to her from her master. The design looked completely like something that would be worn by practitioner of Buddhism or Taoism. But, this place was other world Hyperborea. She must have ordered her subordinate in Byakurentou to purposefully create this.

That cloth had also became soaked wet a long time ago by the waterfall water. Her body was also completely freezing.

She had to focus on sutra chanting in order to forget the coldness too. Riona continued.

「Jousetsu boukyoukee, muushuu okushuujou, ryounyuu oobutsudou, nyoorai muuryoukou常説法教化、無数億衆生、令入於仏道、爾来無量劫.....buhah」

「Eliminate your wicked perspective and turn your heart into nothingness!」

Another scolding from the master who was watching from outside the waterfall basin came once more. *Rip rip*. Riona screamed.

「Ouchhhhhh-!?!」

They were in a small island that was several dozen kilometers away from the island that contained the mansion of Byakuren Ou.

It was an island that contained small mountain, forest, clear stream, waterfall, etc. It had everything that made it a location truly suited for

training.

Riona was confined here.

There wasn't a single boat in the island. Even if she flew to escape—the onmyoudou that Riona specialized in as well as Yatagarasu's spiritual power were all sealed.

It was because of the so called 《prohibition art》 that her master Luo Cuilian applied on her.

(To think that the second coming of Abe no Seimei, this Toba Riona-sama is treated as though she is a little child like this!)

Riona was secretly gnashing her teeth. There was a reason for that.

Her training was the waterfall meditation that could be said as the cliché among cliché. It was old fashioned, in addition was the illogical coaching that was simply like power harassment from a superior. Usually Riona would scoff and ignored this kind of teaching.

But the “honorable master” had personality as well as physical strength that didn't allow that.

.

The sun set and she received permission to get out from the waterfall.

Riona was wheezing while climbing up to the ground. She lied down spread-eagled with her whole body still soaked wet. Her master, sect master Luo Hao was right beside her.

The godslayer who was possessed both wisdom and courage was clad in loose ancient Chinese outfit today.

She was a completely nonsensical existence who was able to fight well even in such getup.

「Ho, honorable master, you mentioned that you are a magic user—that you are a practitioner using Taoism as the base. You’re a Taoist.....no, you are female so should you be called as Taogu?」

She was still unable to stand up from being too tired. But there was something that was bothering her.

Riona kept lying on the ground while talking to her master.

「And yet you are making me to chant Lotus Sutra—the sutra of Buddhism endlessly. In other words you’re someone following the school of Quanzhen that adopt the taste of Buddhism to Taoism, is that correct? It feels like practicing the legend of Wang Chongyang that is familiar in work like Kinyou’s wuxia novel for real.....」

「Well, it’s something like that. However」

Luo Cuilian was looking down on Riona with a gaze as though she had encountered a rare animal.

「Even in such state, you’re really intelligent aren’t you.」

「Because that’s my strong point. Please praise me more.」

Feeling moved and thankful when getting praised wasn’t the style of Toba Riona.

However she wasn’t a match against the reaction that Luo Cuilian showed in the aspect of being outlandish.

「In that case, I shall command you. Discard that cleverness intentionally, and arrive at the emptiness—at the state of mind that is free from every wisdom and thought.」

「Heh?」

「When you're able to do that, you will be able to advance to the next level.」

「The, there isn't a single person on earth who is able to speak to this me with such condescending attitude you know?」

Riona grumbled in blank amazement. The reply came back swiftly.

「I don't know about other people. However, I'm someone who has gone far ahead than you—to far higher stage that will make you feel faint. That's why keep to my teaching well.」

The honorable master talked as though her words were the truth of the world.

And then, that was also the reality. But, Toba Riona wasn't someone who would obediently do what she was told to do. She whipped her tired body and slowly stood up.

With her queenly obstinacy on the line, she attempted to hold even more intellectual conversation.

「Let's change the topic, honorable master. Please give me your teaching already.」

「About what?」

「Like, this Hyperborea, what is the mythology that is used as the base of this world.」

「Who knows?」

In respond to Riona's question, sect master Luo Hao spoke as though such thing didn't matter at all.

「I'm not especially concerned about such thing. You too should stop thinking about insignificant matter. Something like the truth of the world is

something that you will suddenly perceive by yourself when the proper time comes. Until then you can just spend your days while amusing yourself with the nature in heaven and earth.」

「Uuuuu. This is why someone who follows the philosophy of Laozi and Zhuangzi to do nothing and take things as they come is just.....」

「But if I have to say one thing. In the sanctuary of Hyperborea, a form of an extremely ancient belief is left behind in a very simple form. I find it interesting.」

「What do you mean by that, honorable master?」

「In here the name of god isn't that important. Rather than using name, the gods are recognized and worshipped by the masses with title like The One Who Bring Back the Light, The One Who Expand the Land, The Warrior of Flame, Devam King, and the like. Also, in this Hyperborea—there are a lot of gods who are waiting for their revival even after death.」

「Gods waiting for revival? That's」

The topic that the master suddenly mentioned made Riona bent forward in curiosity.

「It's about the 『heroes who died in the underworld』 that honorable master mentioned before isn't it? Those people who would one day resurrect.」

「It's not in just the underworld. There are also gods who died in battle when the world was once destroyed. Their body and soul are waiting for the time of revival.」

「That, please teach it to me in more detail!」

Even though she was an embodiment of the ideology of Taoist, but as expected from the great sect master who possessed both wisdom and courage.

Precisely because she had stayed in this world for a long time, she was properly watching at the things that ought to be watched. Until now Riona was sitting down on the ground with slovenly posture, but.

She quickly fixed her sitting posture into seiza and begged in supplication to the master.

「I'll also do my training with utmost effort, so please!」

「How truly glib..... But, very well. According to my observation—this world once touched the fury of the gods and a great flood occurred. Most of the lands were sinking into the bottom of the sea, therefore Hyperborea became a world of only sea.....」

It was exactly like the hypothesis that she herself formed. Riona nodded ‘uh-huh’.

She listened carefully once more to the lecture of her master that sounded like the sound of Chinese zither being played.

「From the sinking land, dragon of water, dragon of earth, evil spirit and the like appeared and destroyed the gods and heroes. A part of the gods who were defeated and died at that time are waiting for the time of revival.」

「What should be done so they can revive?」

「For example, when a sacrifice that is worthy for that person is offered. This place is where such tale of death and revival are repeated many times. Whether it is at the surface or the underworld——」

「Hahaa.....」

Riona was greatly impressed.

「A world where Hero's Journey is repeated mostly automatically. So to speak Hyperborea is a 《hero world》 then.」

「Hou. Hero world Hyperborea. That's a really good naming.」

「What I don't get, is the connection between that hero world and sun god Apollo..... Honorable master, we're already covering this far, so please teach me about that too.」

Riona supplicated to her master once more.

Luo Cuilian who was out of norm at every aspect. No matter how much of a queen Riona acted as, it was a bit disadvantageous for her to challenge her master from the front. Perhaps she should cajole her master while also attacking her weak point at time——.

She convinced herself that this too was also training and prostrated herself for the first time in her life.

「At this rate I'll be curious about the answer of the puzzle and become unable to empty my mind!」

「Fumu」

Sect master Luo Hao pondered only for an instant and immediately chuckled.

「In that case, I shall grant you my teaching. Listen carefully.」

「My many thanks to the honorable master!」

「The god of thief stole Apollo's cow——there was such story wasn't it?」

「I know the story, Hermes's cattle thieving. Hermes sneaked into the ranch that Apollo owned and seeing the many cows there, he got a sudden impulse. If I remember right, he roasted a cow whole in front of a cow shed and ate it.」

The master's word caused Riona to recall the story.

「In Homer's poem, the scene of 『roasting a cow whole for offering to the god』 often appear. That's quite the case of food porn isn't it.....」

Even at Trojan War, the heroes and royalty often roasted a cow whole.

It was for making offering to the gods of Olympus. But, for some reason they ate the grilled cow as it was and then began a party.

The content of the poem was listing the depiction of food porn that seemed to be really delicious.

『Cut the cow's thigh, envelop it with fat meat that is folded to two layers, and put raw meat on top of it』, 『hold it up over the firewood and grill it, put the entrails that are skewered over the fire too』, 『after all present finish eating the leg meat and entrails, skewer the remaining meat and carefully roast it——』, etc.

Since she was confined in this island, Riona had only eaten thin porridge.

It was porridge of barley with only vegetable leaves boiled in it. The taste was terribly bland. Every meal had the same menu. It was a very sad menu. It was the honorable master's policy that simple diet was also training.

Riona's stomach was going to growl thinking of fatty beef.

Sect master Luo Hao suddenly muttered.

「Now then. Why was Apollo in possession of a lot of cow?」

「Perhaps, it's because he is the protector god of stock-farming isn't it?」

「I wonder about that. Now that you mention it, I heard that Apollo have another name Apollo Hecatonbios. It seems that the origin of the word means 『offering of a hundred cows』.」

「In other words, Apollo who has a hundred cows sacrificed to him——」

「If you think of it simply, the meaning is literal. But, perhaps it should be interpreted as the one who sacrificed a hundred cows.....I think that should be the case.」

Luo Cuilian said various things with meaningful tone. Riona grew impatient.

「Honorable master, I'll be frank, what is the answer to the puzzle!? I'm curious!」

「Fufufufu. That's as far as I'll teach you.」

The beautiful Luo Cuilian ignored her disciple's pleading and smiled aloofly.

「Riona—you are intelligent and also has curiosity without equal on top of that. You must be hopelessly bothered about what kind of meaning my words has! Shake off that idle thoughts, climb over that greed that isn't fitting for a person of wisdom, and arrive at the mental state of emptiness!」

She gave hint was as a part of training in the end.

Riona was feeling dizzy and unsteady on her feet at Luo Cuilian's thoroughness.

.

2

「Oo Paean. Oooo Paean」

Apollo the bright was humming.

In his left hand was a silver bow. He nocked an arrow of light there with his right hand.

「When I wield my bow of silver, you all are cheering, saying 『O officiator of bow and lyre, shoot thy shining arrow to afar swiftly』. When it fall down to the land of my Phyto, all shout together, 『Ooooo Paean, the one who shoot down dragon and snake』 they say.....」

At the wasteland of the underworld.

Apollo was standing above a slightly elevated rocky mountain and aimed his bow to below.

Ahead of where the shining bright arrow was targeted to, there was his fated arch-enemy. It was the land dragon that tore apart the great Apollo several days ago.

But, the terrifying monster was already hit by several hundred arrows.

It already had no spare strength to resist. It lied down on the ground on its belly and could only hung down its head powerlessly.

That land dragon—the huge beast that was of the same kind with the arch-enemy of the sun god, Python was finally pierced through by the sure kill arrow of Apollo.

「Oo Paean. Glory to the one who offer sacrifice Apollo.」

The arrow splendidly pierced the forehead of the land dragon.

The last strength left the huge body of the terrifying beast. The two eyes that were blazing fiercely with killing intent in the past were closed. The resurrected Apollo obtained victory—.

「Fu..... With this the heroic tale is completed.」

Apollo smiled while looking down on his enemy's corpse from high.

That was right. It was insufficient with just getting resurrected. It was the accomplishment of his counterattack toward the opponent that once defeated him that became the completion of 『the trial of the magnificent one』 .

Thus, the deceased god now could return as 《The One Who Bring Back the Light》 —.

「Let me say it again now. That 『there is light』 even in this world that is filled with despair.」

Right after Apollo solemnly declared.

The corpse of evil dragon on the ground—the tip of its tail was lit on fire. This fire was spreading in the blink of eye and completely enveloped the dragon's huge body.

「This is truly the brilliance of life, the flame of salvation..... Now then, I should summon the remaining sacrifice——」

Right after he whispered so, Apollo turned around.

「So you come, Rokuhara Ren. What a tenacious man you are.....oo! For Princess Cassandra to be with you too, what kind of magic you used!？」

The far shooting god's sharp eyesight discovered it, The coming attack of the beast that was worthy to be recognized as his great enemy, and the revival of the maiden who he once tried to give his affection to.

Apollo stared at the group that was walking toward him and let out a smile.

「Let's postpone the ceremony for a while.」

He silently waved his hand. The corpse of the land dragon that was only started to burn vanished.

.

「Then, I'm going. Everyone, get away from here for a bit.」

Ren stopped walking for a moment and talked to his companions.

「I managed to save Cassandra somehow but, I don't want Apollo-san disturbing us anymore after this. That person said about bringing destruction to our earth after all.」

「Certainly, that person is the enemy of Buddhism that ought to be defeated here.」

The spirit of Umayado no Ouji nodded.

「Strive forward, godslayer. It's also the guidance of Buddha for you to enter a battle in the underworld too. I too intend to help you as much as I can.」

「I'm also praying for Ren-sama's fortune in war.」

Cassandra also spoke sincerely.

On the slightly elevated rocky mountain some distance ahead, Apollo was standing with a silver bow in hand. Perhaps he was grinning just like usual there.

—Ren noticed. The lovely Troia princess was looking very worried.

She was staring at Rokuhara Ren with an indescribable pained look.

「It's fine. You're a good girl, so wait for a bit here.」

「Yes.....ah」

Ren hugged Cassandra closer and lightly kissed her forehead.

The anxious girl finally made a slight smile. She must be forcing herself to smile. In order to allow Ren to fight without any worry.

Cassandra looked down just for a moment and then she lifted her face in determination.

「Even my big brother Hector who is dead is surely wishing for Ren-sama's victory too right now. I will also aid Ren-sama with all my effort!」

This time she declared strongly. Ren smiled.

「Yeah. It's like I got the strength of a hundred people with me if Cassandra is helping!」

「Leave it to me!」

During this time, Fumika was watching over the conversation between the princess and Ren with a shocked gaze.

Ren suddenly approached and hugged his fiancée's little sister.

「I'm going now, Fumi-chan♪」

「Hyaaaah!? Ro, Rokuhara-san, wha-wha-what are you!?!」

「What, it's just a hug. I was thinking that perhaps Fumi-chan also want one.」

After joking mischievously, Ren made a thumb up.

「If the worst case happen to me, run away with Cassandra until the surface. After that you can rely on Riona and Luo Hao-oneesan. Then」

「Ple, please do your best, Ro——Onii-san!」

Fumika gave her encouragement even while feeling astonished.

Ren received that voice with his back while walking forward by himself. He walked toward Apollo. When there was only ten meter left until the rocky mountain where the god was standing on, Ren called out.

The radiantly beautiful youth smiled widely and looked down at Ren from the height.

「So you come, godslayer!」

「Did you wait? Nice timing. The bad thing that you did to Cassandra—I want to give the payback to you.」

Although Ren was speaking out his resentment, his expression was bright and his footstep was also light.

Already—he wasn't as highly strung like when he was irritated by the kidnapping of Troia's princess. He also wasn't raging because of the land dragon's vitality that filled him.

Surely his unnecessary tension had been nicely let go from his mutual touching with Cassandra.

He was the usual Rokuhara Ren that was following his own pace and mood that was too lighthearted.

It was fine like this. Smile. Relax. If he wanted to move quickly than straining himself was forbidden. He had to keep his body and his heart's flexibility—.

Like that he would be able to display his highest speed for the first time. He could oppose even Apollo's divine bow.

「Fufufufu. I'm feeling your composure, Rokuhara Ren. This time—you can exert your everything to challenge me. Because after removing the obstacle called Rokuhara Ren, Apollo will immediately return to your surface world with the intention of bringing destruction to that land.」

「So Apollo-san is also in the faction of 『the polluted earth is unnecessary』 huh.....」

Ren muttered. The shining god turned his bow toward him.

「Of course. I too am someone with the same ambition as Athena. Such land that achieved prosperity in that kind of completely distorted form ought to be burned to ash with flame and sunk down to the bottom of the sea as expected. There is no other choice than that. After that—I will expand the land again with my hand.」

This time Apollo was nocking his silver bow with a jet black arrow.

Everything was black from the arrowhead until the arrow feathers. It had an ominous coloring. The weapon wasn't suited at all with the radiant handsome youth, but mysteriously it didn't give any out of place feeling.

「I took out various arrows that I kept in reserve within my depository. It'll be great if it suit your taste.」

「Go easy on me. I'm someone who don't want to have a hard fight or anything like that.」

「What a coincidence. Me too!」

As soon as he said that, Apollo fired the jet black arrow!

Ren's perspective instantly entered the accelerated state. He should be able to dodge the arrow anytime. But, before Ren started to move——

The jet black arrow broke into pieces!

「Know the threat of Apollo Smintheus.....of Apollo the Mouse. I'm also the leader of the mice racing through the darkness carrying sickness with them!」

The destruction of the arrow produced fine powder and was scattered in the air.

In addition, wind blew and spread the powder out. Ren too almost breathed in this powder, but his back suddenly felt shivers.

「Uwah!？」

He took a big leap behind using the agility of his accelerated state.

He jumped until more than ten meter behind and somehow evacuated from the spreading range of the fine powder.

And then Ren saw. The tree growing from the land of underworld—the tree that had withered a long time ago was showered by the powder from the jet black arrow and it rot to black color.

「Eh!？」

「I Apollo am a god of healing art who cure sickness. However, I'm also a god of pestilence who spread around sickness. Even if you dodge my arrow itself, you won't be able to dodge the sickness inside the arrow too!」

「You have that kinda arrow!? It's like the chemical weapon thing!」

Apollo faced the shocked Ren and fired three more arrows in succession.

The three of them were black arrows. The arrows of sickness. All of them climbed high to the sky and broke apart in the air. A terrifying amount of poison powder was coming down on Ren's head—.

At that time, a familiar voice resounded through the sky of the underworld.

『Namu—Yakuou Bosatsu, Yakujou Bosatsu! Bestow your blessing!』

「Umayado no Ouji!？」

The voice that chanted the spell belonged to the crown prince of imperial virtue.

The poisonous powder that caused sickness—immediately became sparkling grains and vanished ephemerally in the air before long.

『Although I'm not at the level of the reincarnation of Yatagarasu, this Umayado is also the personification of savior Guanyin. I shall be of assistance with my meager strength!』

Shoutoku Taishi aka Umayado no Ouji's voice rang out.

Ren was grateful to receive his support. However Apollo quickly aimed his silver arrow toward the thankful Ren.

He drew the string. However there was no arrow. He wondered what kind of attack it would be.

「Then what about this!」

Ren intentionally stood still and sharpened all his nerves.

If he focused too much on attacking, his reaction would surely slow down. He heightened his defensive instinct to the maximum and sharpened even his hearing!

Whoosh whoosh. Whoosh whoosh. Whoosh whoosh. Whoosh whoosh!

「Unseen arrow or transparent arrow, anyway arrows are coming huh!」

Ren splendidly detected the arrows relying only on the sound of the arrow feathers cutting through air.

He began accelerating at that instant. He jumped far to the side. He safely dodged the unseen arrows. Then Apollo quickly fired two arrows.

—This time it was also unseen arrow but.

Doon! A sound of destruction echoed.

A lump of air was fired from the bow like cannon.

Fortunately the flow of air was transmitted on Ren's skin, so he was able to guess the flight of the air cannon. Ren ran once more and dodged this one too.

Although impacts were bursting on the dry ground of the underworld, Rokuhara Ren wasn't there.

「In that case, how about this!?!」

Apollo summoned his usual shining arrow and fired.

Ren side stepped with his super acceleration. He dodged the arrow with room to spare—was how it should be. However the arrow's speed was great and it grazed Ren's left cheek.

A line of scratch was created and blood trickled down. Although it was a small wound, it was still an arrow wound.

「Eh.....?」

「Fufufu. That's an arrow that flies with the speed of light. So you can dodge it just barely.」

Ren was bewildered. Apollo was chuckling to himself.

Arrow of light speed. If he remembered right, then the speed should be around 220,000 kilometer per second. Ren's godspeed was equal to lightning, around 150 kilometer per second. The speed difference was unbelievable!

He barely dodged was because the shooter Apollo didn't move in the speed of light.

He summoned an arrow of light, nocked it, and let go of the string—.

During those actions, Ren ascertained the firing line in his accelerated state and took evasive action. That was why he wasn't hit. However, how long he could continue that? Even if he could dodge two or three times in the critical moment, he had no confidence he could continue dodging after that..... Ren made his decision.

「So I've no choice other than to show my trump card already huh.」

Ton, ton. Ton, ton.

A footwork that repeatedly stepped to the back and front. Ren rhythmically jumped on the ground, he moved back and forth. He jumped slightly to the front, then returned to his original position.

Jumping and then back. Jumping and then back. It was the lightness of an outboxer.

Apollo standing on the rocky mountain laughed loudly.

「A fist fighting of the future that even Apollo doesn't know about is it? But, it won't work against this arrow!」

「I wonder, about that!」

The instant the arrow of light was let go, Ren—split into seven.

The afterimages of Rokuhara Ren overlapped in seven layers and the real one couldn't be ascertained. The situation was looking like that for the one who was facing Ren!

The arrow that came flying with light speed pierced through one of the afterimages.

「What!?!」

「It's a new technique that I learned recently. It's pretty good right?」

Apollo was astonished. Ren stood still and ended the afterimages.

He was simply standing alone on the underworld's wasteland without blurring into seven of him. But, he immediately began to perform the steps *ton ton*.

「I want to try practicing it, so try shooting it one more time.」

「Very well. I'll test the quality of that sleight of hand for you!」

The light arrow was fired and Ren split into seven once more. One of the afterimages became sacrifice.

Smile vanished from the face of the radiant Apollo. He praised with a serious face.

「Splendid, Rokuhara Ren. I never even thought that you're able to do that kind of movement.」

「The theory is really simply though.」

The point was to start making feint the instant the godspeed was activated.

That was all. He moved with small repeated movements and stepped to the right, to the left, to diagonally forward, to diagonally behind, to every direction, so that it couldn't be predicted where he would leap toward. By repeating such small and repeated motion in godspeed—he could create multiple clones.

It was a technique that he found at his first confrontation against sect master Luo Hao.

At that time, Ren tricked the sect master with a sliding kowtow. That was how it looked like.

But thinking back, technique like spinning kick or forward jumping locking technique, the surprise attack techniques that was attempted by throwing forward the user's body would misfire if it was executed without really good timing. To say nothing when the opponent was an expert who boasted as 『the emperor of martial arts』 .

In fact at that time sect master Luo Hao was watching Ren escaping by rolling on the ground without any trouble.

In other words his kowtowing movement was seen through.

Rather—wasn't the faint that he showed before that more effective?

Right, left, front, back, would she know where he would jump to? Repeating small steps like a single-minded fool. That movement was actually the one that was confusing her wasn't it?

By making use of that movement thoroughly, Rokuhara Ren reached a new frontier of 『clones』 .

And then now—

The arrow of light speed came flying for the third time.

Ren too started to make small steps. *Ton ton ton ton totototo*—the godspeed feint created seven clones. One of the afterimages was pierced by the arrow of light. In that instant.

Ren stopped the feint and jumped with a speed of lightning.

He instantly jumped toward Apollo who was standing on the rock mountain and came until the same height with him.

Ren glared at the gallant sun god and chanted in the air.

「Divine punishment Nemesis is handed down toward wicked deed that harmed life—I ask for the judgment of justice right here!」

The words of power of Retributive Justice. The figure of winged goddess appeared behind Ren.

The numerous attacks that he received until now were all returned to the sun god Apollo. The phantom of Nemesis spread opened her wing widely behind him.

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The phantom of the goddess was also in the sky together with Ren who jumped to the air.

Nemesis's ice blue hair fluttered and her beautiful face was hidden by a black mask. Pure white wings were growing from her back that was clad in crimson dress.

Those wings now were overflowing with the divine punishment of Retributive Justice.

The arrows that Ren had dodged many times. Arrows of light, arrows of sickness, arrows of light speed. Arrows. Arrows. Arrows. Arrows.

Of course, they were flying toward their original shooter Apollo.

Also, behind the rocky mountain where he was standing, the land dragon that he defeated before this appeared while groaning 『Nuuh』. It was resurrected only now at this time as phantom to take revenge for itself!

And then, Apollo who was the target yelled.

「Oo, Nemesis! It has been a long time since I saw your figure!」

In that moment, Apollo was pierced by numerous arrows.

The land dragon's phantom bit him from behind and gnawed at him whole.

The stock of Retributive Justice that Ren accumulated mercilessly trampled the unruly sun god. It was a full power attack that drew victory toward him, but.

「The falling Apollo is like the darkness of night——」

The handsome youth that was seriously injured spoke out words of power.

「Watch the abyss of the raging god! I am the one and only king of darkness!」

It was the words of power of darkness. Even though it shouldn't suit the radiant Apollo at all, the scripture summoned darkness that extremely suited him.

And then Apollo who was pierced with numerous arrows and crunched by the land dragon's teeth was——

Turned into darkness itself.

Indeterminate darkness. Black mist. Hazy vortex of dark.

Apollo transformed into such thing. The arrows of divine punishment that were fired one after another from Nemesis's wings stabbed into that vortex of darkness. However.

All the arrows——were absorbed into the formless darkness and met annihilation.

Even the land dragon that should be biting the handsome youth was also swallowed into the vortex of darkness.

「Fufufufu. I somehow made it in time.\

Apollo's beautiful voice came from inside the darkness.

「If I receive that divine punishment whole, my body won't hold. Allow me to let it pass like this.」

「Apollo-san, you can use power of darkness too even though you're a god of light. That's absurdly unfair isn't it? The elements are totally opposite of each other.」

Ren grumbled. He was standing on the rocky mountain where Apollo was at until just now.

He watched Apollo enduring Retributive Justice from his big jump while landing here. On the other hand, Apollo who transformed into darkness laughed.

「No, no. rather it is darkness that is the origin of me, Apollo.It was the darkness of the depth of earth that hid my mother who was pursued. The young child who was born in darkness rose into fame later on and became a radiant hero. Yes—Apollo's true essence is 《hero》.」

The voice of the youthful god leaked out from the spiraling darkness.

The voice was refreshing but contained an ominous echo somewhere in it.

「It was also me who was born in darkness and hidden in shadow. It was also me who was a heaven-sent child of darkness and caused calamity. It was also me who murdered evil beast and offered animal of sacrifice to the heaven. It was also me who shining bright as the heaven-sent child of fire and light. It was also me who wielded strength as an unruly hero and be victorious——」

「But Apollo-san, you said it before right?」

Ren retorted smoothly.

「You said that light will vanish if it's hit by stronger light. If following what you said, then won't darkness also vanish if it's hit by strong light? It's the staple that the sun is what drive away darkness.」

「Indeed, it's exactly as you say.」

Apollo who became darkness itself easily agreed.

「To speak the truth, your retainer.....the fire bird maiden is a bit of concern for me. She might become the one who illuminate Apollo that is like darkness with her sun. But you're unfortunate. I don't know the reason but, your connection with your retainer right now—is obviously severed.」

「As expected from Apollo-san, to actually realize that. But」

Ren grinned.

「It's fine. There's an amazing reinforcement in her place.」

「What!？」

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The radiant Apollo transformed into darkness—a little while before that happened.

Umayado no Ouji who was watching over the confrontation between god and godslayer from behind suddenly turned his gaze to the people who were present with him and he opened his mouth.

「As expected, it become just the princess predicted. Tamayori Hime, do you remember my command?」

「Ye, yes-. Furube yura yura to furube——」

It was the spell of Tamayori Hime. Fumika chanted with her whole heart.

She aligned her heart with the ghost of Japan's crown prince in order to heighten his miraculous strength even further. Without delay Umayado no Ouji unsheathed the straight sword on his waist.

With its tip, he finally pointed at Apollo who turned into a vortex of darkness—

「I humbly wish to the four heavenly kings. Allow me sure victory against the enemy opposing me. Daitzura Taten, Birurokushi Yaten, Biruhakushi Yaten, Bishamonten—come namu Shitennou!」

The imperial prince of imperial virtue personally performed a summoning.

Immediately four armored warriors appeared from empty air.





The four Gohou Douji serving the crown prince was modeled after the four heavenly kings who were the protector of Buddhism. The manifestation of Vaisravana, Dhrtarastra, Virupaksa, and Virudhaka.

The four of them had expression of rage, and each of them was holding a spear, a sword, an axe, and a halberd.

The four heavenly kings flew freely. They looked down at Rokuhara Ren from the sky and quickly surrounded the vortex of darkness—the avatar of Apollo and thrust their respective weapon.

Instantly, Umayado no Ouji chanted.

「Light pure and innocent, break all darkness with Buddha's limitless light of wisdom!」

The four warriors of four heavenly kings immediately shined from their whole body.

It was a light that was like dazzling sun. Furthermore, that radiance was increasing rapidly and became a pure white flash that brightly illuminated the land of underworld—.

「Ooh!?!」

Even Apollo who was in the air as a vortex of darkness let out an agitated voice as expected.

Cassandra narrowed her eyes from the radiance while clearly hearing that voice. Even the handsome youth who was always having a ruffian smile tugged on his lips was finally taken by surprise.

「Splendid work, Taishi-sama!」

「What. This too is solely thanks to princess's oracle. It's also your achievement.」

Umayado no Ouji nodded large heartedly in response to Cassandra's gratitude.

In the middle of accompanying Rokuhara Ren who was looking forward to a confrontation with Apollo while walking in the underworld. Cassandra who obtained a prediction softly whispered to the godslayer and the imperial prince's ghost.

The two who weren't normal people at all immediately accepted the words of the cursed prophet—.

『Hou—! That person will transform into darkness itself sooner or later?』

『That's a secret trick that is really like Apollo-san.』

『Then, I have a secret plan. Just leave it to this Umayado.』

And then now the four Gohou Douji made the light of sun to descend—.

In front of the radiance that was too bright, Umayado no Ouji chanted once more.

「Even within the terrifying battlefield, if one pray for the power of that Guanyin, then every foe shall be dispersed altogether!」

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Thus, the raging Apollo was caught in a trap.

「Nu—OOOOOOOOOH!?!」

He raised a shriek that could split the land and felt anguished.

He was illuminated by white lights from four directions. The figure of vortex of darkness was shrinking bit by bit. If it continued at this rate, Ren would be able to win. He secretly got that hunch—it was then.

「Fu, fufufufu」

The spiraling darkness laughed meaningfully with Apollo's beautiful voice.

「You're quite something, Rokuhara Ren. The flame I accumulated in this Hyperborea in order to destroy your world—I never thought that I would have to suddenly use it.....」

Flame? Ren felt suspicious, but right after that the vortex of darkness chanted.

「There is light even in this cursed world.」

The jet black mass spiraling in empty air—vanished.

In exchange, the handsome young man Apollo was floating there shining bright. It wasn't that he looked shiny. He was really emitting divine white light from his whole body.

「So you returned to your original form.....」

Ren muttered.

The four armored warriors flew beside the rocky mountain that was using as foothold.

Of course they were the four heavenly kings. Vaisravana, Dhrtarastra, Virupaksa, and Virudhaka lined up smoothly in front of Ren and took defensive posture. Even if Apollo fired the arrow of light speed, the four heavenly kings should protect him—.

The victory or defeat was like a coin toss. That was what Ren thought but,

「Watch this, o godslaying beast.」

Apollo emitted light while floating in the air. He spoke solemnly.

Ren was taken aback. When he noticed around the rocky mountain he was standing on right now—was filled with corpses of animal. Most of the corpses were bull. Then there were also deer, horse, boar, wolf, elephant, etc.

Every one of them had splendid body. They were beautiful with the appearance of divine beast.

In addition there were even 『a caterpillar with countless short legs』 and 『a soft and flabby lump of meat with indeterminate shape』 .

「These are the animals floating in the sea? The one that suddenly turned into island.....」

「Indeed, they are the animals of sacrifice. Apollo went around Hyperborea in this one month killing them and throwing them to the sea—. Their souls after death flowed into this underworld. I gathered them here.」

The ground that Apollo and Ren looked down at was filled with dead animals.

There must be more than a hundred of them died. Furthermore, it increased by another one. Even a corpse of a huge land dragon suddenly appeared, lying down on the ground.

It was the dragon that once killed Ren, then shared its vitality with him later on, and then it got murdered by Apollo—.

「Listen, Rokuhara Ren.」

Apollo formed his sentence with manly beautiful voice.

「I'm a traveler who came from the sanctuary of the ancient Greece, but originally I came from the east. The east seen from Greece—it was a land between inland sea that was called by the humans as Caspian Sea, Black Sea, and so on. That land is none other than Apollo's original hometown, the land that was once Hyperborea.」

「Eh?」

「Several hundred days of travelling from the holy ground Delphi. The land of far northeast, at the bank of Black Sea there is Kavkaz Mountains and Colchis Country. If you advance even further east, it'll finally be beyond the north wind.....」

If Ren's memory served him right, it would be Caucasus region.

If it was referred by country name then it would be Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and so on. Come to think of it, the space distortion near Ararat Mountain that Ren and others entered was old Armenia territory.

Apollo spoke sonorously with a beautiful voice.

「In the distant ancient times, the gods in this land had no name. They were simply the 『heavens』 itself, and the 『animals』. Yes. The humans who were so unsophisticated that they only had stone weapon worshipped the animal they hunted, the buffaloes and deers that became their life sustenance as “sacred thing”.」

Apollo was only talking, he wasn't attacking at all.

Rokuhara Ren who had used up his stock of Retributive Justice wouldn't attempt any attack from his end—perhaps Apollo had seen through that. Ren felt a light irritation. But he mustn't.

Anger and irritation would dull his movement. Let go of his tension, relax.

He resolved himself. He should hold the feeling that he should at least go along with Apollo's long talk.

「Is that a story about the stone age?」

「Umu. Before long the time went on and the gods who were nothing but animal were given name—and human figure. For example I, Apollo was originally a wolf, and also a mouse. Athena who you also know was an owl, and a terrifying snake. Also a lot of goddesses were female cow.」

「Cow—now that you mentioned it.」

Ren looked down. He looked around at the heaps of animal corpses.

「Cow's corpses numbered the most here.」

「Hyperborea people were people of stock-farming. Cow is especially important sacred beast. For them, killing a cow was a sacred ceremony. They would lit up a great fire and roasted a cow whole, then they would also share the meat with everyone as a sacred ritual. The humans would kneel and worship the burning flame and roasted cow as “sacred thing”. Also, the murdered cow was also an offering to the gods in heaven.....」

——‘Hm?’ Ren noticed.

It was starting to burn. The corpses of the sacred beasts that were piled up on the land that he and Apollo were looking down at—were lit with crimson flame.

One corpse, then another corpse was burning in crackling flame.

Apollo was looking around at that flame with satisfaction.

「Hyperborea people were people who tamed horse and rode on them or using them to pull carriage. They migrated to the east, west, and then further south where they passed down their myth. The land that you humans know as Persia was a country which received that influence strongly. In that land—there was a god who ought to be called as distant cousin of I Apollo.」

Burning. Burning. The dead animals were burning one after another.

As though every single word of Apollo was calling for that flame.

「Oo Mithra. God of law Mithra. Just like how Apollo formed the law in Hyperborea’s land, Mithra too formed the law in the ancient Persia. He also had a 『myth of killing cow』. When Mithra killed a cow, plants and medicinal herbs also grew from the corpse, covering the land with greenery.」

The animals lying down on the ground were all enveloped in flame when he noticed.

The heat caused ascending air current. Hot wind was blowing toward Apollo and Ren.

「Do you understand, Rokuhara Ren? Sacred beast slaying in other words is a ceremony to 『expand the land』 !」

「It's that animal of the beginning thing huh. More importantly Apollo-san!」

The lower ground was becoming a sea of fire.

The animal corpses that became the trigger for the fire caught fire in the blink of eye. The force of the flame was increasing second by second. Ren yelled among it.

「Aren't you playing with fire too intensely here!?!」

「Forgive me. Killing animal—and burning them with flame. This is a set of sacred ritual. The burned animal becomes meat, becoming a holy dining that satisfies the people's hunger. The smoke that is caused by that flame will rise until the sky and become an offering to the gods living in heaven. Therefore」

Apollo's voice was containing magic power.

Fanned by that, the surface of flame was blazing up as though to scorch the sky.

「The one who killed the sacred beast become the god of fire. Because they control fire they become the embodiment of light and sun!」

「UWAAAAAAAAAAH!?!」

The blast of flame that rose from the ground swallowed Ren.

Apollo's talk of legend was a spell incantation as it were. It was words of power to summon the sacred flame. Because an obvious attack would only get dodged by Rokuhara Ren.

The four heavenly kings that originally should become a wall to protect Ren also got burned by the flame.

Ren heightened his magic power to maximum and somehow endured the flame's heat.

However, how long could he hold on—. He had to rush out as fast as possible with Nemesis's escaping legs. The moment Ren resolved himself,

(Don't, Ren!)

The small goddess who was fused with Rokuhara Ren, Stella's thought came to him.

(This flame is an offering to the gods that will reach until heaven! No matter how high and fast you are flying, it will chase you until the end of the earth!)

「Then I'm counting on you Stella! Use your strength!」

(Leave it to me-. Umayado no OUji, lend me your servants for a while!)

Rose colored light was emitted from the whole body of Ren who was burning.

And then, Vaisravana, Dhrtarastra, Virupaksa, and Virudhaka who were similarly enduring the flame were flying in succession toward Ren and entered inside his body!

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The godslaying beast possessed strong resistance toward divine curse.

That was why right now Rokuhara Ren was burning the mystic force contained inside his body to the maximum to endure the flame that Apollo summoned.

However, there was no way he would be able to pull through with just that.

The sacred beast slaying flame swallowed the whole area that became the battlefield. It was burning high with a force that would scorch even the sky. It was a divine force of scorching heat that would bring death to even godslaying beast.

That was why, Umayado no OUji was praying with his whole heart.

He was watching the progression of the duel from far away while praying in order to protect the godslayer.

「 Suppose one hold the name of Guanyin Bodhisattva, even if they enter a great fire, the fire won't have any hope of burning them. With the desire power of Guanyin, even a fire pit will change to be no different from a pond! 」

It was a sutra to wish for divine protection from fire.

He entrusted it toward the four heavenly kings. Vaisravana, Dhrtarastra, Virupaksa, Virudhaka—the four of them were already fused with Rokuhara Ren's body.

The four heavenly kings inside the godslayer were also praying.

「 「 「 「 「 Desire strength of Guanyin, fire pit into pond! 」 」 」 」 」 」

Umayado no Ouji and his four Gohou Douji chanted the prayer of flame repellent.

Thanks to that and the peculiar tenacity of godslayer—Rokuhara Ren somehow endured just barely without getting burned by Apollo's flame.

「 This feels like getting pushed into the stone oven to grill pizza..... 」

The rocky mountain that Rokuhara Ren used as foothold was becoming red hot.

Sooner or later it would surely become lava that flowed down. But, on that rock that was becoming red hot—the godslaying youth was going strong even while he was on one knee.

His clothes and skin still hadn't started to burn.

Although his clothes was getting scorched here and there, he himself was only sweating.

However, it must be a heavy burden to stay smack dab in the middle of blazing flame. He who was boasting swift feet couldn't even stand up and fell on his knee.

The sun god Apollo was looking down on his arch-enemy who was like that while singing in the sky.

「Oo Paeon. Oooo Paeon. The great god who expanded the land and increased the livestock are now holding the rite of fire. He shall burn the hundred offering cows right now——」

He sang a festive poem as the words of power to work up the flame.

Each word that Apollo recited became fuel that strengthened the fire. He intended to continue this and annihilated Rokuhara Ren in fire.

The far shooting god flicked the string of his silver bow as though he was strumming a lyre.

Pling. Pling. He had no more intention of using it as weapon. He judged that if he carelessly shot, that arrow would only be turned for Retributive Justice.

「Aa, Ren-sama!」

Cassandra was feeling anguished with painful thought.

She felt frustrated that she was only able to watch like this. Even if she fired an arrow to the raging Apollo, the arrow would be burned to nothing before it could reach him.

Princess Cassandra was born in a warrior family. She also had skill in fighting.

But, she had no prowess in the level that would allow her to interfere in the battle of god against godslayer. If only she could transform into a bird of fire like Toba Riona. Or perhaps, if only she was as strong as her heroic brothers—.

「My deceased brothers! Please protect Ren-sama!」

At the very least, she would pray imploringly to her brothers who died in Trojan War.

.....Without her noticing, Toba Fumika had approached until right beside her. The younger girl was staring fixedly at Cassandra, and then she addressed her even while feeling blocked in her chest.

「Ca, Cassandra-san-. Can I speak for a bit!?!」

Suddenly Fumika took Cassandra's hand. Cassandra tilted her head.

「What's the matter, Fumika-sama?」

「I'll explain later-. Focus on listening to my prayer while concentrating so that your feeling is placed into it! If you do that, then perhaps we'll be able to do something amazing!」

「Eh?」

「God of swiftly galloping wind, I beg you to intermediate—. Akitsu mirror, Hetsu mirror, Yakka sword, longevity stone, moving stone, death returning stone, path returning stone, shawl of snake, shawl of bee, shawl of various articles.....combining the ten varieties of treasure one two three four five six seven eight nine ten furube yurayura to furube—」

Fumika chanted after taking a breath.

「Visitor from the faraway realm of the dead, come here right away!」

Right after that. A thunderous sound echoed like thunderclap.

Rattle rattle rattle! Rattle rattle rattle! Rattle rattle rattle! Rattle rattle rattle!

Cassandra muttered 「Oh?」. It was a familiar deep sound. It was the thunderous sound of wheels rotating with tremendous speed when horses and chariot were sprinting swiftly—.

She looked up to the sky searching for the source of the sound. Cassandra was shocked.

「Hector-niisama!?!」

A chariot was soaring to this direction from the sky faraway.

Two war horses were pulling the chariot. There was no driver. There was only one person standing imposingly on the chariot, taking aim with his peerless bow—it was her dead big brother, the princess of Troia Hector!

The chariot was running over Cassandra's head.

At this time, her big brother definitely waved his hand in greeting toward his little sister below—.

「Even though Nii-sama should have died, how!?!」

「This is the realm of the dead! With the feeling of Cassandra-san who is seeking for someone deceased and the lineage of royal family who is descended from the gods, it won't be strange for something like this to happen!」

Fumika taught her happily.

She seemed to be excited. She was puffing up her abundant chest that didn't take after her big sister.

As expected from Japan's Tamayori Hime. The shrine maiden who summoned the spirits. There was no mistake that it was her achievement for

guiding them to reach this miracle.

.

The area of flame that scorched even the sky was burning Rokuhara Ren.

He wondered how much time had passed since he was swallowed by this flame. Was it several minutes, ten minutes? He became unable to understand even that.

The heat was making his mind hazy. Ren muttered.

「I'm able to hold on thanks to Taishi-sama but.....at this rate I'll be roasted whole.....」

His throat was also in a worse state than being parched dry.

It felt like his whole body was drying up completely from getting exposed to the extremely sweltering heat.

And then, the ruler of the great fire Apollo was staying in the air. He was at the same height with Ren. He was watching the prey who was unable to move with deep interest.

Both of them were similarly scorched by blazing flame.

However, Apollo looked completely unruffled. Ren called out.

「.....Isn't this fire too grand just to kill me alone? Even though you don't need to make a camp fire this big for this.」

His voice was hoarse because his throat was dry.

Apollo made his ruffian smile and narrowed his eyes in delight.

「What are you saying. As expected from a godslaying beast, you're enduring the great fire of annihilation well. You're truly something. However——」

The gaze of the handsome youthful god became slightly sharp.

「It seems your limit will come soon.」

「Well obviously getting into a sauna without being able to take cold bath is harsh. But, well, I think it's still in the degree that I can endure.....」

Ren somehow acted strong with a powerless voice. Apollo nodded.

「Then let me test you. This is the finishing move.」

The far shooting god readied his silver bow for the first time in a while and nocked an arrow of light.

Of course, the shining arrowhead was aimed at Rokuhara Ren's forehead.

「Now then—I wonder if in your current state you will be able to send retribution in respond to my arrow or not.」

「That's a hard trial but, I've no choice to take up the challenge.」

The index finger and middle finger of his right hand. The fingers to pull the trigger of the Retributive Justice.

Ren joined his two fingers just like usual and made his resolve. From here it would be do or die—the timing to decide the victor and loser at the end. It was then.

Rattle rattle rattle! Rattle rattle rattle! Rattle rattle rattle! Rattle rattle rattle!

A chariot was charging with two divine horses soaring in the sky pulling it.

A warrior drew his large bow above the chariot and fired it. His name—was of course known by Ren. It was a great hero with impressive and handsome face. The armor covering his body was also one with history behind it.

「Hector-san! Isn't that Cassandra's big brother!?!」

「Oo!? Hero of Troia, why are you turning your sword toward Aoplo who protected your home country!?!」

Both Ren and Apollo were astonished.

Hector continued to fire his powerful bow even then. More than ten arrows rushed toward the sacred beast slaying sun god.

Most of the arrows were burned before they could reach the target and turned into ash.

However, there were just two arrows that hit Apollo. The first arrow pierced the beautiful youthful god's right flank, while the other one sunk into his left thigh.

「Nuuh!?!」

Apollo groaned. The arrow wounds weren't fatal, but they were still a painful blow.

Taking advantage of that opening—the flying chariot and two sacred horses crashed on Apollo. The hoofs of the powerful sacred horses kicked Apollo flying. He was blown far away!

「Ooooooh!?!」

The god of fire was falling toward the ground that was covered with great blazing fire.

On the other hand, in front of Rokuhara Ren—the godslayer who was on one knee above the scorching hot rocky mountain that could melt anytime now, Prince Hector was standing there when Ren noticed.

In an instant just now he jumped down from the chariot and jumped until this spot.

As expected from the brave warrior who rivaled even Achilles the swift. He was agile. Hector was fully armed with a long sword and shield while looking down on the crouching Ren.

He gave no fighting spirit or killing intent. Hector 's lips were opening and closing.

「——」

His voice couldn't be heard. Ren realized.

Perhaps his words couldn't be heard by those who wasn't Tamayori Hime. Yes. The hero of Troia Hector had died a long time ago after all.

When Ren looked, the whole body of Prince Hector was starting to burn.

The tips of his limbs were already scorching black. No matter how great of a hero he was, as expected he couldn't stay safe within the great fire of Apollo.

Ren understood it. Within him, Stella sent her thought to him.

(This child's armor and shield are treasured articles of Troia's royal family. It's not as great as Achilles's equipment, but they seem to possess quite the effect. They're doing well protecting their master even within this fire.)

But, even then they couldn't completely defend against Apollo's blaze.

Why did Hector come to Ren? Open and close. The lips of the prince were still moving even with flame burning his whole body.

Ren recalled this person's disposition.

「It's fine. Leave Cassandra to me. I don't really have any asset that I can boast about, but I'm someone with a lot of friends. I'm also feeling really happy to be able to meet her. So much so that I want to pray to god that if possible I want to be together until death part the two of us——」

(Wait! Wait Ren, why are you prattling about!?)

Ren ignored Stella's retort and stared at Hector.

He was a virtuous man of character. The first prince who treasured his family. The supreme commander of Troia army in the past smiled in satisfaction—and caught fire.

His body from his head until his toes were finally becoming ash along with the armor on his body.

But, two weapons fell in front of the crouching Ren—the long sword and shield of the hero Hector. The two of them were still in good condition even with the fire burning them.

「This is——」

(He is telling you to use them, Ren! Quickly take them even if just the shield!)

The round shield was made from wooden planks joined together into a round shape, with seven pieces of tough cow hide layered on top of it, and finished with solid bronze plate affixed on it——.

Urged by Stella, Ren took this shield.

Immediately, his body that was tormented by sweltering heat became more comfortable. The magic power residing in Hector's shield was starting to protect the godslayer Rokuhara Ren.

Finally Ren stood up and looked around the surrounding that was transformed into a sea of fire.

Here was above the rocky mountain. The visibility was good. He immediately found Apollo who was ran over by Hector's sacred horses and chariot and fell to the ground.

Surely Apollo was in a daze for a while.

He was standing up at this time. He was trying to recover his balance even while staggering on the burning land.

In addition he was aiming the silver bow in his left hand to Ren and he also had summoned a shining arrow in his right hand.

「To think that Hector would intrude. Because of that the good opportunity was ruined but.....it's time for the curtain closing soon!」

The arrow of light speed.

It was a weapon that Rokuhara Ren 『couldn't evade』 and one that he had to face with resolve.

The far shooting god nocked the arrow with unparalleled fast movement—but Ren felt a clear conviction the instant the god was trying to do that.

「It's my win. All thanks to Hector-san and Cassandra!」

He moved in lightning speed with confidence.

Originally Rokuhara Ren could only accelerate when evading enemy's attack. However all this time until now, even now he was being exposed to Apollo's flame. He could move with godspeed at any time.

He picked up Hector's long sword in front of him—and leaped toward Apollo.

His left hand was holding a shield. His right hand was holding a long sword that he didn't swing around. He readied it near his waist with the tip pointed forward. He moved his body to collide with Apollo!

At this time, Ren's jumping down movement was exactly like a falling lightning.

「Guhah!?!」

「O fate, manifest the entanglement of karma—now is the time for the judgment of justice!」

The words of power of Retributive Justice. He returned back the flame that had been dealt to him severely.

However, Apollo's torso that he pried open with the long sword that he thrust—inside that wound. The flame was for the sake of burning the inside of the heroic god who was also a god of fire from inside there.

「Do you intend to destroy the heaven-sent child of fire and light with flame, Rokuhara Ren!?!」

「There is no art to it if I use it the same way like Apollo-san after all!」

The instant Ren said that, he already started running away.

Using Goddess Nemesis's escaping feet, he headed to a ground several kilometer behind with just one leap, retreating from the sea of fire swallowing this area.

Apollo was looking up at Ren who was jumping far behind with an astonished look.

According to him 『light could be erased with stronger light』. In that case, what if fire was combined with a fire that was just as powerful—?

The result came out in front of Ren who was flying high in the sky.

The flame of Retributive Justice ran amok inside Apollo's body. Perhaps because of that a large explosion occurred, as though the god of fire itself became the trigger.

It swelled up in the blink of eye—

A fire ball that was too huge was manifested in the land of underworld. If it was an area that was only as big as one of Tokyo's 23 wards, it felt like the scale of this fire ball would be able to reach its whole area with its impact and shock wave.

Epilogue

1

Even though Apollo was swallowed by such great explosion——

The limbs of the handsome Apollo wasn't scattered into pieces, he was barely going strong. He became covered in soot and battered all over, even so his unrivalled handsome form was still properly in shape. None of his arms or legs was blown away.

As expected from the god of sun, he must have repressed even the force of that explosion to some degree.

But, as expected he couldn't do it fully. The damage from the heat and impact seemed to punish the inside and outside of his body terribly.

Apollo was limply lying down on the ground of the underworld.

He was being looked down by Rokuhara Ren right beside him while——.

「I have to concede that this is your victory, godslayer.」

「Despite that you look quite composed aren't you, Apollo-san.」

When Ren pointed that out, the soot covered sun god shrugged while looking upward.

「Unthinkable. I'm feeling truly regretful. I returned home to Hyperborea after much effort and intentionally took the challenge of 『the path to become hero』, those are also for the sake of becoming an even more powerful god of fire. Yes. I wish to become an existence that can possibly

bring about—a flame that is sufficient to burn your world of the surface into ash.」

Apollo might be talking about his true feeling which was rare for him.

There wasn't any sign of him hiding something like usual. He was honestly feeling vexed.

「Good grief! Even though I wish to achieve the incineration of all land and scorching the sky without fail with the radiance and flame of the Apollo reborn. How truly vexing. I'm defeated before I could unleash the flame of certain destruction that I had finished after much trouble!」

Ren somehow listened to the complaint of the defeated Apollo.

He couldn't bring himself to feel triumphant or happy. Because he himself was also exhausted both in body and soul with no spare strength left. However the next moment he gasped.

Apollo spoke with a really frustrated look.

「Since it's come to this, I shall entrust everything along with my corpse to you. Just as planned beforehand.」

「Umu—. This Athena will succeed everything in the unlikely event that Apollo is defeated. Don't worry, o radiant onePhoebos. Your remains will also become nourishment of fire as 『sacrifice』.」

A short sword fell from the sky along with that voice.

It stabbed deeply into Apollo's heart. The assassination blade came so suddenly. However, the youthful god who was covered with ash was smiling in satisfaction and spoke.

「The world shall be destroyed with great flood and great fire. I'm counting on you, my sworn friend.」

Bo-! Apollo's body on the ground was enveloped in fire.

The muscular body of the handsome youth was immediately burned to nothing by blazing flame. And then, a small sphere of light came out from that flame and flew to behind Ren—.

Ren hurriedly turned around.

「So Athena-san also came.....eh?」

「What's the matter, Rokuhara Ren?」

Ren was taken aback. Goddess Athena asked coldly.

The appearance that only looked like a girl in her low teen. Green robe. There was no change to that. But unlike before where she had short hair, her hair now was really long.

Her silver hair was shining nobly like melted drop of moon.

Her hair reached until her waist. Within this long hair, there were 『living snakes』 mixed in.

The snakes were wriggling and baring their fangs. They hissed ‘shhhh’ and glared at Ren. The snakes that were fused with Goddess Athena's silver hair numbered more than ten.

Each time these snakes moved, Athena's hair was also wriggling like living snake—.

「That's a drastic makeover you've there.....」

「Emulating my sworn friend Apollo, I too traveled in order to take back my past self in this Hyperborea. So to speak it was a 『path to become queen』 .」

「Queen you say?」

In front of the surprised Ren, Athena's silver hair and snakes were meandering again.

It was a strange as well as eerie form. However at the same time it was sublime and gave the impression of a kind of beauty.

「Before I became the daughter of the sky god Zeus in ancient Greece, Athena had this kind of form. It was when I was a queen of the divine world as the supreme mother earth goddess. I was finally able to recover the divinity that became the key for that in this Hyperborea. In this place old belief and way of god is remaining pronouncedly. Thanks to that I finished without exerting much effort.....」

The Athena who Ren knew was a goddess with a sharp gaze.

It hadn't changed even now. However, previously her gaze reminded him of owl. Right now her coldhearted gaze reminded him of other creature. Ren muttered.

「A snake huh.....」

「That's right Ren. In the distant ancient times, Athena was also a goddess of snake.」

Stella came into being on Ren's left shoulder.

「Throughout this woman's lifetime, she was always followed around by the snake women of Gorgon clan. For example like Medusa that was carved on Athena's shield. In the first place that was because Athena and Gorgon was the same existence!」

「Indeed. It's just as the princess Aphrodite said.」

‘Kukuku’ Athena chuckled.

「I thought the lightheaded you have completely forget it, but to think that's not the case. Looks like there are things that even the goddess of wisdom Athena doesn't understand!」

Athena spoke sarcastically. Her hand was holding a sphere of light.

It was something that came from the remains of Apollo that was burning right now. This sphere was absorbed into Athena's palm.

「I inherited all the flame that Apollo raised! What's left is only to release it on the surface world!」

Athena declared heroically despite being a beautiful girl goddess.

「It will be a bit further from now for Athena of the shining eyes to make up for her loss against Rokuhara Ren. After I return to the surface world of yours—to the world of earth, we shall have a showdown!」

Athena who was transformed into a goddess with snake hair—that bizarre form vanished.

However, only the eyes that were like snake were still floating in the air. They were staring at Ren with a sharp glint. The finishing was a war declaration by Athena's voice.

「Before long I will begin the holy war of the surface world's annihilation. Until that time return to your birthplace and recover from your wound and fatigue. When Rokuhara Ren is in his perfect condition.....that's when I will pulverize him without fail!」

The two eyes of the goddess also vanished.

.

「Hou——. You want to return to your earth now?」

「Yes. I'm going to stop the world's destruction quickly.」

Riona pleaded while prostrating herself with a laudable expression.

She wasn't in the small island that became the location of her abduction, confinement, and abuse. She had returned to the previous island inside the mansion of Byakuren Ou. She was sitting seiza on the wooden floor and bowed while pressing three fingers of each hand on floor toward the 『honorable master』. Her outfit was also her girl high school's blazer.

Luo Cuilian wearing an ancient Chinese outfit was sitting on a wooden chair.

The master who was overly strict spoke an answer just as expected at the end.

「However Riona. You're still in the middle of training. It's not admirable to abandon it.」

Putting more importance in the pursuit of the art rather than the danger to the world.

The owner of sense of values that was unbelievably too peculiar was standing in the way of Riona.

—Yesterday, Rokuhara Ren and his group returned to the island of Byakuren Ou with a surprise victory of bringing back Princess Cassandra safely.

Thanks to that Riona was also able to receive permission to return to the main island.

She still hadn't heard about the detail of the journey. But, the story about Goddess Athena inheriting the flame that Apollo created had been reported to her.

She had to return to earth in emergency. Riona spoke further.

「One day I will search for a chance to return back to honorable master, that's why, I'm begging you.」

「However——」

「Ah, then, although this might sound bad, what if there is a replacement for me. How about honorable master try giving guidance to my little sister while I'm gone?」

Aware that the situation didn't look good, Riona tried attacking from another direction.

「She has an interesting qualities as Tamayori Hime.」

「I noticed. Although, her talent isn't as outstanding as yours——」

「Actually there is an 『insider』 within that child! Shoutoku Taishi! The legendary sage who was also said to be the reincarnation of Guanyin!」

「If I'm not mistaken he was an eminent figure of Japan.」

Luo Cuilian finally got interested.

「I have heard about his rumor. Although he was a worldly person, he was said to be a deeply devout believer of Buddhism and left behind an annotated edition of sutras.....」

「That's Hoke Gisho. A writing about the king of all sutras, Lotus Sutra.」

「.....Actually when all of you came here, for some reason I suddenly recalled about Lotus Sutra. Because of that I tried using it for your training too but——I see. That kind of existence was hiding and stimulated my spiritual sense.....」

It seemed that she had sensed Umayado no Ouji's presence vaguely. As expected.

A dry smile formed seeing the monstrous capability of her honorable master. However, seeing that it seemed she was holding interest to her little sister, Riona secretly went 「Yossha!」 and clenched her fist.

.

「Eh? Fumi-chan as sacrifice for Riona?」

「That sounds misleading. It's something like becoming disciple for her to get experience.」

At the wharf of Byakuren Ou's island.

Riona was currently piling up water and food together with Rokuhara Ren. It was in order to load them later into the magical yacht that was granted to them by her master Luo Cuilian.

「Besides look. We have to travel Hyperborea for a bit more to find a new space distortion. That child was also happy you know? She's able to remain in the island of Byakuren Ou where everything is available——」

「It's surprising that the gate we used to come here is gone.」

The goshujin-sama nodded to Riona's words.

Riona had sent shikigami in order to confirm the route to go back to earth. However, the space distortion that should be there had vanished.

「That's because it was a point that was opened forcefully by the magicians of Campiones association. Because of that it might be unstable. Or perhaps the mess before we entered—the battle between Julio's protector knight and the low class angel affected it..... Well, it's no use to think about something that's gone. Let's search for the next one.」

Riona muttered.

Also, she didn't tell Fumika that 『you might get trained by being confined in an isolated island』 . She hid that in order to make her little sister consented to stay behind readily.

On the other hand, there was also the princess who was a victim of kidnapping until just a while ago.

「Riona-sama. If it's alright with you, I'll try divining the direction where we should head to!」

Princess Cassandra proposed energetically.

「In the past, when I was serving as a priestess in the temple, I also learned divination!」

「Aah. That thing that is also familiar in Homer's poem huh.」

「We've no clue at all in this travel, so please do it. We're counting on you, Cassandra.」

「Yes. Ren-sama♪」

Rokuhara Ren and Princess Cassandra were talking to each other with bright smile.

Their distance was really close as though they were peering on each other's face. It looked like they were becoming far closer than even before the kidnapping.

It was understandable. Riona nodded.

(The princess was also going through many hardships after all. And then Rokuhara-san saved her, so it's natural that they get friendlier with each other than before.)

When she was thinking such thing——

「Bird girl.....」

「Eh? What's the matter, Stella?」

Various items were brought into the yacht that was bestowed to them by her master.

The small goddess Stella was sitting on a barrel of drinking water. She called Riona's name and Riona replied, but the goddess of love spoke in a whisper with an expression as though she was exasperated about something.

「No, it's nothing. Well, if you don't notice, then it doesn't really matter.」

「? What do you mean?」

「Nothiiiing. ——Wait Ren, and also princess! Don't just waste time flirting, be properly mindful of me too!」

「My, my apologies, Stella-sama!」

「Now now. I'll do this so spare us. Besides, we have to sail out soon. If the danger of earth's destruction is close, then we also cannot really take our time leisurely.」

Rokuhara Ren kneeled and worshipped the small goddess and changed the topic.

It was exactly like he said. They had the mission of going back home and faced the unprecedented crisis.

Riona switched her mood even while feeling something tugging on her mind.

「We will find a new space distortion as fast as possible and then come back to pick up Fumika. Then we will save earth. Let's go with that plan

everyone!」

Although the mood was a bit lighthearted, she called out a new at her sense of duty.

Her goshujin-sama, and the princess and goddess of ancient Greece were also nodding with the same mood.

What was the hour and minute that the Doomsday Clock in the headquarter of Campiones association showed right now?

But, their present urgent business was to find a way home.

Afterword

Everyone, long time no see.

The destination this time is mythological world Hyperborea.

While it's a place name that appeared in Greek mythology, it's a place with unclear details.

And then the antagonist is God Apollo who is actually shrouded with many mysteries despite being too famous.

There are a lot of theories about his origin.

If it's talked concisely then it will be 「Perhaps he isn't a god that is native to Greece, but his origin isn't really clear. Perhaps he is from the Orient?」.

And so this time, I tried recalling a favorite motto after so long.

『Theory could be applied anywhere just like ointment.』

Apollo. Hyperborea. Cave picture of the Stone Age.

The original homeland of Indo-European languages. Flood legend. World creation. Ritual of sacrifice. God of light. Etc, etc.

I tried assembling all those factors together, and joined them with the logic of 「It will be interesting if it's like this!」.

It was something that I sometimes did in my previous series

『Campione!』.

(Like my unholy combination of Amazoness legend with King Arthur myth.)

It'll be great if everyone can enjoy this.

Actually this is the same technique like when forming absurd & conspiracy historical view like 『The roots of Japanese people and Jewish people is the same!』 or 『Minamoto Yoshitsune became Genghis Khan!』 or 『Jesuits was the mastermind of Honnoji Incident!』 or 『Apollo program didn't go to moon!』 and so on. It will be great if everyone can accept it as only entertainment in the end (wry smile).

The glossary talking about that is also in the middle of publishing at Takedzuki Jou's Twitter.

Various theories regarding Apollo, the resemblance of A○○○○○○ legend and Mi○○ mythology that is talked in this volume 4, and so on are explained there.

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Now then. This time there is also the version attached with audio drama released on sale.

It's a short story that depicted the meeting of Rokuhara Ren with his "senior" godslayer Kusanagi Godou.

It's passed off as the later development of volume four, but the content is one that I want to label as supplement chapter instead. It's even connected to a mystery of Hyperborea world that I cannot talk about in this volume. It's full of exposition. Full of battle. Even the author who plotted it didn't think that the story would become that important (sweat).

Oh dear, I was overdoing it from when I could call Matsuoka Yoshitsugusan and checked with him.

「Matsuoka-san, previously you passionately talked something like 『No matter what kind of absurd request it is, we will respond to it for sure!』 didn't you.....」

And, I created a plot filled with everything from battle to exposition which was unbecoming for a drama with only voices.

Until before the recording, I was thrilled wondering 「Can this go well I wonder?」 .

Fukushima Jun-san who voiced the main character Ren and Matsuoka-san who voiced Godou acted the battle part in question passionately. The sound effect staffs who were the same like in anime Campione! were also really great help. It ended up as a work that surpassed my expectation.

Of course everyone who voiced the female characters were also really great help.

Ookubo Rumi-san who voiced Riona, Suwa Ayaka-san who voiced Cassandra, Hieda Nene-san who voiced Stella. They didn't just reproduce the image of the author, they acted their part with plus alpha result. I think that this audio drama has wonderful quality.

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Now then.

The journey in sanctuary that concerned the end of the world would finally reach the climax 『Apocalypse Arc (temp)』 at the next volume.

But before that there is a plan to publish a book that I has declared since some time ago.

The special arc of my work Campione!, 『God of War Once Again』 . It's the later development of a series that has been turned into anime too, and an episode that is also related to Shiniki no Campiones. I also plan to depict the missing link that will connect the two works.

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